

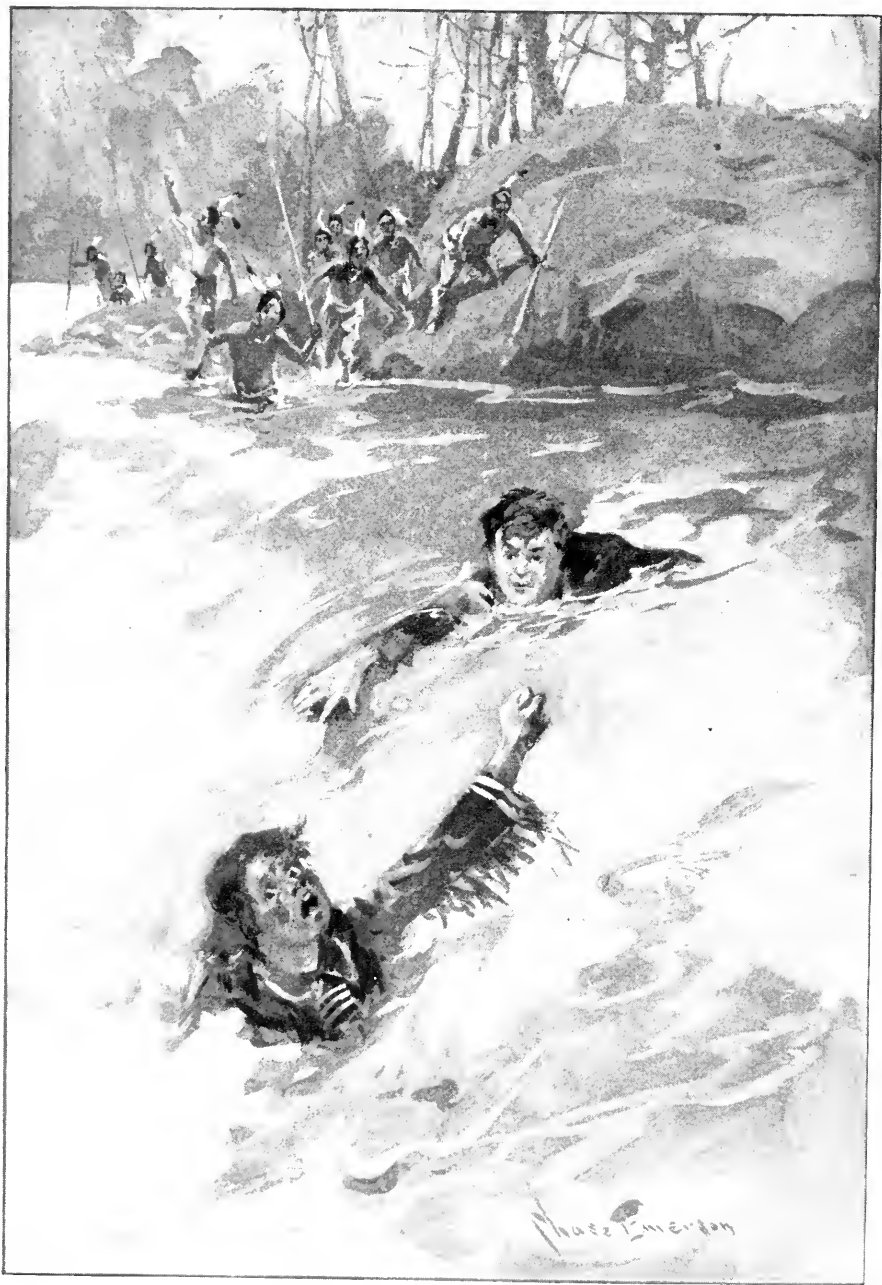




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A Courier of Empire



HE SPRANG FROM THE LEDGE INTO THE STREAM."

A Courier of Empire

A STORY OF MARCUS WHITMAN'S
RIDE TO SAVE OREGON

BY

JOHN H. WHITSON

AUTHOR OF "WITH FREMONT, THE PATHFINDER," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY

CHASE EMERSON



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BOSTON

CHICAGO

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Preface

THE name of Marcus Whitman is linked inseparably with the great Northwestern region once known as Oregon, comprising an area much greater than the state which now bears that name. Whitman's ride across three thousand miles of wintry wilderness to save Oregon to the Union was one of the most remarkable achievements in the history of our land, though until recently comparatively unrecognized. Whitman's famous ride and much of the history of his life in connection with early Oregon are here set forth. In his previous book for boys, "With Fremont, the Pathfinder," the author followed the career of General John C. Fremont, and gave an account of the manner in which California became a part of the Union. The aim of the present volume is to show, in the form of an interesting and entertaining story, how the vast region called Oregon became a part of the United States. It is hoped it will meet with the favor shown the previous work.

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A Courier of Empire

CHAPTER I

TIMUITT'S BROTHER

THE appearance of Phil Curtis, as he came out of the lodge of Tilskit, chief of the Cayuse Indians, would have delighted the eye of any boy of to-day, for his deerskin leggings were of the newest and whitest, his moccasins shone with beadwork, his fringed hunting-shirt, belted in at the waist, was quilled and ornamented most elaborately, and the round cap that protected his head was of the glossiest beaver skin.

In the lodge behind him stood an Indian woman whose look of kindliness and pride was mixed with something of anxiety and sorrow. This was Neekomy, wife of the chief, and her deft fingers had fashioned the clothing which set so well on the straight and handsome boy.

As Phil Curtis emerged thus from the lodge and looked out over the tiny clustering Indian village, a

group of men came into view from the worn game trail that ran by way of the mountain gulch to the swift river. They were Indians, with one exception. This exception was Phil's father, a tall, bearded trapper, whose soiled deerskins contrasted strongly with those in which his son was now arrayed. He appeared to be moving in the midst of an Indian escort. By his side walked a plumed chief, who was none other than Tilskit himself, just returned from a successful hunting trip into the mountains. Behind the trapper and the Indians came ponies laden with game, the fruits of the hunt.

The Indian woman spoke, in her native tongue, from the shadow of the lodge:—

“It is good. The great chief thinks warm thoughts, for he has much game. His face shines. His eyes are filled with favor; it is well, and you may go.”

As if this were a signal, though it was not, an Indian boy stepped from the lodge to Phil's side. His attire was an exact counterpart of that worn by Phil, even to the rude figure of the salmon wrought in white beads, which ornamented the breast of the hunting-shirt. This boy placed his hand somewhat timidly on Phil's arm.

“Boston soon be Timuitti's brother,” he said, in broken English. Then added instantly, in the Cayuse

tongue, "But he has been my brother always, since the time at the great river."

Without once looking at the lodge where the boys stood with the Indian woman behind them, the chief and the trapper turned toward a larger lodge, which they entered, the Indians crowding after them.

Again the Indian woman spoke, this time in a more encouraging way, and the two boys, so alike in their clothing, yet so unlike in all things else, walked together toward the lodge into which the trapper and the Indians had vanished. At the door they stopped, in hesitation. Then the Indian boy pulled aside the flap with a sort of reckless courage, thus revealing the interior.

Behind him Phil heard the voices of squaws and children, the snarling of dogs, and the loud hum of excited conversation; before him he saw his father and Tilskit seated on a bearskin rug, the other occupants of the lodge crowding about or seeking seats on furs or on the grass which formed the floor.

Then he was being led forward by the Cayuse boy, and a moment later was standing in front of the plumed chief, who had his ceremonial pipe out and was rubbing some willow bark in his hands preparatory to the formal smoke which usually precedes an Indian conference.

Phil looked at his father, whose dark, wind-burned

face showed no surprise. The Cayuse boy was looking at his own father, the chief, who had stopped in his work of pulverizing the willow bark and was regarding his son with questioning intentness. Just the shade of a frown came to the chief's face when he observed the clothing that Phil wore.

For a full minute he said nothing. Outside the hum of talk rose and fell like the low murmur of a waterfall, but within the lodge utter silence reigned. The mind of the chief had leaped the barrier of more than a year, as Phil's had done.

What each saw and remembered was a swift tributary of the Columbia River, swollen and impetuous from heavy rains, rolling in mad and turbid flight toward the greater river and the sea. On every hand towered precipitous cliffs and cañon walls, between which the wild river sped in its flight. On a level spot near by was an Indian village, occupied by this band of the Cayuse tribe. There children were playing, dogs barking and racing, ponies grazing, squaws cleaning and drying fish, while over all the blue smoke of lodge fires rose skyward as if to bar out the circling and screaming gulls.

Along the river, wherever a rock jutted into the stream or thrust up a black back to tear at the racing water like a saw, stood Indian boys and men, armed

with salmon spears, or with long poles to which nets were attached; for the fishing season was at its height, and the salmon, crowding in from the sea, were seeking to ascend the streams, impelled by that strange instinct which drives them far up into the fresh-water rivers to deposit their eggs. The mad, roaring river was alive with the fish, and the Cayuse Indians were busily engaged in securing their annual harvest.

Phil Curtis was there with his father. They had come up from the trappers' post at Vancouver, a month before, and had been trapping, hunting, and fishing near the river ever since. On this day Phil stood with some Indian boys on a narrow shelf of granite overhanging the river, and was dipping up salmon with a net, and flinging them out on the rocks. The Indian boys, two of whom were the sons of Tilskit, the Cayuse chief, had become unduly excited, for their luck was great, and this was play for them, not work.

Suddenly a net, dipped incautiously into the swift river by a laughing boy, was caught by the wild current, which swung it sidewise with incredible force. It was as if a giant hand had reached up and plucked the boy from his footing on the granite shelf. Seeking to save himself from the river, he threw his arms about Timuitti, his brother. The next instant both were in

the boiling waters, which sucked them under and out of sight.

Phil Curtis, who had been standing but a few yards below them, on seeing the accident ran swiftly down stream as far as the ledge would permit. The Indian boys were too much excited to do anything but howl. They did this, however, with all their might, though the thunder of the river prevented the sound from being carried very far.

As Phil reached the limit of the shelf, he saw the two sons of Tilskit rise like a revolving wheel to the surface of the stream. Locked in each other's arms, they were struggling frantically, and, as Phil knew, drowning. There was no time for consideration. Just below, the waters fell, spreading out into a somewhat placid lakelike arm of the river, though beneath that placid surface the turbid current was churning in a veritable whirlpool.

Phil did not have time to throw off his clothing. He had no time for anything, not even to think. If he had considered the possible consequences to himself, he might have hesitated. In his heart was a great desire to save those boys, with whom he had hunted, fished, and played, and whom he had come to like quite as well as if they had been boys of his own race. So, when he saw them whirled upward to the surface of

the treacherous river, and observed that they were being carried toward the pool, he sprang from the ledge into the stream.

He could swim like an otter, and he knew it. Hence it did not seem to him that the risk he ran was so great as it really was. He struck the water fairly, and went under like a diving seal. When he rose to the surface, so well had he calculated his own position and that of the Cayuse boys that he found himself within two yards of one of them. They had become separated in some way, and one went under again, just as Phil came up.

The other, who was Timuitti, was flaying the water in wild excitement, and had evidently become bewildered. Phil saw that he, too, was being drawn under, and so began to swim toward him with strong, even strokes which fought the terrible current so vigorously that at once he began to make headway. Timuitti was sinking from sight when Phil's sinewy right hand caught him by the hair.

Then came a struggle which Phil could never forget. He was swept with Timuitti into the pool, where the churning current beneath drew him down like the undertow of a fierce sea. Twice he was dragged under. Then the current hurled him and the Indian boy toward one side of the pool. Here

came the final fight. Hampered in his efforts by Timuitti, whom he still held by the hair, and who, now unconscious, had ceased his wild gyrations, Phil essayed again and again to reach the rocky shore with his burden.

He pulled in until but a few yards separated him from his goal; when, beginning to weaken, he was caught once more, and might have been swept with the Cayuse boy back into the pool had not some of the Indians, gaining that point, formed a rope of themselves by joining hands, and so dragged the two out upon the rocks.

Many things had happened since that battle with the terrible swollen tributary of the Columbia; and now Phil and Timuitti, the boy he had saved, had met again in the mountains far to the eastward of that salmon stream.

Phil and his father, both trappers, had come into the village but an hour before, after discovering that it was none other than that of their friends of the Cayuse tribe. Tilskit and some of his hunters were away in the mountains, though expected back at any time. But Phil and his father had been remembered by the friendly natives, especially by Timuitti and Neekomy, his mother, who welcomed them with every manifestation of kindness and good-will.

It was Neekomy who conceived the idea that was now being put into execution; Neekomy who had brought out from her few treasures the ornamental suit of buckskin which had belonged to the son who was now dead; Neekomy who had instructed Timuitti in what he was to do and say, and who now in the darkness of her lodge awaited the result of her efforts. She had lost one son in the wild river; but the other, Timuitti, in whom her soul delighted, had been saved to her by this boy with the white face. Therefore, she would honor him by taking him into her lodge as her son and the son of the great chief, Tilskit. He would occupy the place made vacant by the death of Timuitti's brother; he would become Timuitti's brother! And as John Curtis, Phil's trapper father, had not objected when the plan was broached to him, but had thought well of it, the thing was to be done, if it pleased the chief. Would it please him?

During the minute in which Tilskit was staring at the white boy, the latter began to think that the chief would not be pleased. He even began to fear that the chief was offended. But at length Tilskit's countenance changed, and he spoke, looking at Timuitti.

"What would my son?" he asked, breaking the long silence.

"It is the wish of my mother, Neekomy, that the boy who saved me from the great river shall be my brother. Since the water drank the life of my brother, she has no son but Timuitti."

There was a shade of melancholy in the grave face of the Cayuse chief, as he turned to Phil, at whom he again looked intently. Another painful silence followed. Then the chief spoke again.

"My son," he said, addressing Phil, "I know that you are worthy. It shall be as Neekomy wishes. Henceforth, you are Timuitti's brother."

Gravely he began to fill the peace pipe which he held in his hand. The Indians in the lodge began to talk in pleased gutturals. Outside, some one who had been watching sped away with the tidings to the waiting Neekomy. Phil, at a motion from his father, sank quietly to a skin rug, with Timuitti at his side. In a little while all within the lodge were seated, and the pipe of peace passed solemnly from lip to lip.

Phil Curtis was a Cayuse Indian, so far as he could be made one, and was Timuitti's brother.

CHAPTER II

PERILS OF THE TRAPPER

WHEN John Curtis arrived with his son at Tilskit's village, he was not well. He had come from far to the northward, and the long journey was one of hardship, privation, and many perils. He was glad, therefore, when he discovered this village of friendly Indians and was able to run his log canoe ashore and seek rest in their lodges. For many, many miles that big canoe had borne him. Through cañon clefts and down swift rapids it had dashed, guided by skilful paddles; over many a leaping cascade and waterfall, where an error of the eye, a slip of the hand, or a failing of the nerves meant disaster and perhaps death.

It had been a task to try the strength and courage of the stoutest heart. But there was no stouter heart in all the great Northwestern fur country than that of John Curtis, and his son was like him. Where the great ridges of the Rockies lift in titanic and splintered peaks far up toward the Canadian line, John

Curtis had trapped the head waters of the mountain streams. And the big canoe which bore him and his son at last from the rich hunting-grounds, carried his store of furs. The work had been attended by many dangers, from Indians, from cold, from wild beasts; but the run in the canoe down the swift mountain streams involved many more. Everywhere the fierce Blackfeet lay in wait, eager for scalps and plunder; and the Crows, not so implacable and bloodthirsty, but thieves by instinct, vied with the Blackfeet in making every river, trail, and mountain pass a terror.

John Curtis had evaded all his enemies. He had run wild rapids and boiling whirlpools on moonless and starless nights that he might escape them, had slipped boldly and swiftly past villages of hostiles in the early dawn while the river smoke hung like a white canopy on the surface of the steaming water, and had lain in hiding in thicket and coulée through weary hours, with his canoe and precious furs well concealed, while the blazing sun moved in slow dignity across the blue highway of the sky.

So cautious had been this veteran trapper—with a caution learned by years of experience in the Western wilds—that when he detected the smoke of the Cayuse lodges he pushed his canoe beneath a shelving rock, and mounting to a high hill surveyed the village

long and carefully. Even after he knew that these Indians were a wandering band of the Cayuse tribe, who were supposed to be friendly, he did not venture to make his presence known until he had crept almost into the village itself and beheld familiar faces.

"A rest of a few days," he said, speaking to Tilskit, at the close of the "long talk" with the Cayuses, "will make me all right again. I am worn out, that is all, and rest is what I need. I am glad that I fell in with your people; for, besides the rest I must have, I shall want to buy some ponies of you. I have been hoping for a chance to land somewhere along here and strike across for Green River, where I can sell my pelts. To do that I need ponies."

John Curtis had other talks with Tilskit, and even made some minor preparations for the journey to Green River. But he was delayed by increasing weakness and lassitude, and at last was stricken down with fever. The Cayuses were not skilled as doctors; but in this emergency they did what they could, and the careful nursing of his son did the rest. It was a month, however, before John Curtis was able to be about and to take short walks; and then it was found that the fever had left a lingering weakness that threatened to incapacitate him for a long time to come.

In the meantime the Indian restlessness and love

of change had made itself manifest. The Cayuses declared that they wanted to begin a movement toward the coast; it was many, many miles away, they urged, and the journey would occupy many moons, travelling as they did with frequent stops to fish and hunt in favorable places. John Curtis tried his arts of persuasion to get them to move in the direction of Green River, but they had no furs to sell, so would not lend a favoring ear to his importunities.

When it was evident that the Indians were getting ready to move, and that they did not intend to move in the direction of Green River, John Curtis, who was still very weak from his recent serious illness, held a long and earnest conference with his son.

"It may take these lazy fellows months to reach the Columbia, though I think they will be there by salmon fishing time. But where they will be, or to what point they will wander, between now and then, is pure guess-work.

"Now, it's plain that in the condition I'm in it's best for me to stay with Tilskit and his people, at least until I'm much better and stronger. I don't think I ever felt so weak in my life. That mountain fever did it. It took away my strength generally, and greatly weakened my heart, so that now I could no more pull a paddle in a swift current, or ride a horse all day, than I could fly.

"Tilskit says that his people are going, and he cannot keep them from doing so. The truth is, he wants to be on the move as much as any of them. These Indians are all alike. When they want to move they're like gypsies—nothing can keep them. But he says that they will make easy journeys for some time, until I'm stronger. I think they will do that; and they'll take care of me as if I was one of them, more on your account than on mine. I'm glad they feel that way, for I see I've got to stay with them.

"As soon as I'm stronger, if they don't go fast enough to suit me, I shall leave them and strike out for the Columbia myself. I know the trails, and can get through all right, without trouble, just as soon as I'm really fit to travel.

"And that brings me up to what I want to talk to you about. You know the trails to Green River, for we've been over them together. Though you're young, you're already as good a mountain man as I am. Our furs ought to go through at once, for the traders and trappers are already there and no time is to be lost."

Phil Curtis had guessed what was coming long before his father reached this point. He, too, felt that those valuable furs, the result of a season of

arduous toil, ought not to be knocking round an Indian village for months, deteriorating and accumulating dirt, when there was an excellent market for them at Green River, the great annual meeting place of all the fur buyers and white and Indian trappers of that vast region. True, the trail might be dangerous, but he did not think the danger would be great, and he knew the way well.

"I can take them through all right," he said, in answer to his father's implied question. "There are some bad places in the trail, and the going will be rather slow with loaded ponies; but I ought to make it in something over two weeks, don't you think? What troubles me most is that I don't like to leave you while you're not well."

His father looked out across the level grass-land by the river to the mountains that appeared to bar the way. To a man of civilization that journey would have been long; but to a trapper of the John Curtis type, whose life was made up of isolation and long expeditions, it seemed short.

"I hate to have you go," he said; "but two weeks, or maybe a little more, ought to take you there. The Cayuse ponies are in fine condition now and they'll travel well. They've been having a lazy time all summer, and you can line them out all the way

at a lively clip. You may have to do some night travelling, and lay by in the daytime, if you come across Indian signs. But I don't think you'll meet any Indians at this season of year, if you take the southern trail, which is the one we went over last. It's a little longer, and harder going in places, but it ought to be safe. I shouldn't let you try it, if I didn't think you could make it all right. But you know how to take care of yourself, Phil!"

Nevertheless, he looked thoughtfully at the tops of the mountains; and for a while it seemed that he was almost on the point of abandoning his design to send his son on alone with the furs to Green River. Then his face grew firm; he was a determined man, and peril was a part of his life. To live for any length of time in a land where there was no peril would have been to him a new sensation. A trapper's life held little else but danger, and he had bred his son to the calling of a trapper.

"I've already talked to Tilskit about the ponies," he went on. "I can trade him the canoe and some of the furs that he's taken a notion to. You'll want six good ponies: one for yourself and five to carry the furs. I could get more, but that will be as many as you'll need. And I'll meet you at Walla Walla; or, if I miss you there, at Vancouver. You can go

down the regular trail into the Oregon country, after you've sold the furs, and no doubt you'll be on the Columbia before I am. If I haven't reached Walla Walla, wait for me there; and if I've been there and gone on to Vancouver, follow me as fast as you can, and I'll stay there until you come."

This was the substance of John Curtis's long talk with his son, and of the instructions which Phil received.

The next day the strong, hardy boy, whose spirit was as courageous and indomitable as that of his trapper father, began preparations for the journey to Green River. With the assistance of his father he selected six ponies from the Cayuse herd. On the one he was to ride he tied food and a few necessities, in addition to a small blanket roll of skins for sleeping purposes. To these were added a battered tin cup, a frying pan, and other needed articles of similar character.

Wherever Phil went that day with his father, he was accompanied by his new brother, Timuitti, and by other Indian boys, who had conceived a strong liking for him. Tilskit himself stalked about among the ponies while the six were being selected. The other Indians, with the one exception of Neekomy, who disliked to part from her new son so soon, showed the marked indifference which an Indian habitually assumes.

That afternoon Phil Curtis set out on his lonely ride, accompanied to the edge of the village by Neekomy, Tilskit, Timuitti, and other Cayuses, who were really sorry to have him depart. Phil's father walked on by the side of the pony until the mountains were near. There he shook hands with his son quietly, — he was never a man to give expression to his feelings, — added a few final instructions and cautions, and turned back toward the Cayuse lodges, walking slowly and feebly.

Phil brushed away a tear as he straightened up in the rude Indian saddle and turned the pony into the pass that led to the southern trail. Then he threw his long-barrelled rifle across the saddle in front of him, and glanced keenly ahead over the way he was going. He, too, was a trapper of the great Northwest, and they were never a weeping nor a faint-hearted race.

He was wearing the wonderful deerskin suit with the salmon on the breast of the hunting-shirt, which Neekomy had given him, and that, with his tanned face and the long hair falling from under his cap, made him look more like an Indian than a white boy. He was tall and strong, too, for his sixteen years — taller and stronger than most boys of that age.

All the arts and artifices of the hunter, the trapper, and the Indian his father had taught him. As he

looked ahead along the pass his keen gray eyes caught the flutter of every leaf, the movement of every bough. He noted the dipping, jerky flight of the mountain butterfly, the flirted tail of the magpie on the high rock, the sinuous movement of the grass as the wind rustled through it; and his sharp ears heard every note of bird, or hum of insect, or call of animal.

Behind him followed the trained Indian ponies, with quick thuddings of unshod hoofs. The grass deadened the sound, and no dust cloud was raised by their passing. Beyond the first tall cliffs and the mountains, which were butte-like in appearance, the ground fell away in long undulations, like the roll of the sea.

Thus Phil Curtis passed out and away from the Cayuse village, with eye alert, ear attentive, and rifle held in readiness, though he was sure no danger was near. His attitude was but the mental habit which, under the tuition of his trapper father, had become a part of his nature.

CHAPTER III

OUTWITTING THE CROWS

WHEN night fell Phil removed the burdens from his ponies and lariatied the animals where they could feed on the rich bunch grass that grew in a narrow coulée. A sparkling stream coursed down from the mountains not far away. It was an ideal camping spot.

Phil was in a cheerful frame of mind. The loneliness had no terrors for him. In truth, he did not feel lonely. The animals were feeding near, and his thoughts were company. He loved the great silence and the vast spaces of the mountains and the wilderness. The idea of loneliness, if it had been suggested to him, would have brought an amused and incredulous smile to his face. In the sense in which a modern city boy transported to the country feels loneliness, he did not know what it was.

He was cheerful, because he had made such good progress that day, and because at the end of the afternoon's travel the ponies showed so few signs of weariness. Then, too, he had recovered from the

wrench given to his affections by that pathetic parting with his father. He had turned from that and was looking forward to their reunion in Oregon or at Vancouver. A long time would elapse, he knew, before that could take place; but the meeting would come, at the end of it, and then to the joy of being together once more would be added the knowledge that he had acquitted himself courageously and honorably.

As for the dangers that might lie between his present camping place and Green River, he did not think much about them. Both he and his father believed that the worst perils had been passed in the long run down the river in the canoe. Experience had shown that the route chosen was not likely to be infested by hostile or thieving Indians at that season of the year. Yet this belief did not decrease the boy's natural caution; and when he selected material for his fire that evening, he was careful to choose the driest pieces of wood he could find, and to kindle the blaze in a small hollow, where a large rock would conceal its glow from any one passing near the mouth of the coulée.

He made the fire with flint and steel, striking the sparks into a bit of dry moss, and adding to the glowing and growing speck of red other pieces of moss and some hair-like shavings he had prepared with his hunting-knife. In a little while the fire was going well, in

the small trench he had scooped out for it, and over it he placed his few cooking utensils.

If variety is considered, it was not much of a supper that Phil Curtis sat down to, for it consisted wholly of cured meat, to which was added some cakes of bread made of the flour of ground piñon and other nuts, while the drink was water from the sparkling rivulet. But a keen, almost ravenous appetite made the meal more than palatable.

When the few tins had been washed in the stream, and Phil had changed the ponies for the night, and was rolled in the skins that served him as blankets, he lay awake but a short time, listening to the "ruh — ruh-h" of the ponies as they tore at the bunch grass, the low murmur of the summer breeze, and the distant cry of some night-prowling animal; then he fell asleep, with his feet toward the tiny fire, and the stars shining down upon him from the vast spaces of the sky.

At dawn he was awake. Again the ponies were shifted, that they might feed their fill in the early morning hours; then a breakfast, resembling the supper of the night before, was prepared and eaten. By sunrise Phil was on his way again, following the trail to Green River.

It must not be supposed that this was a well-marked trail, like a beaten road. In many places paths had

been cut deeply into the soil by the passing of herds of elk and deer. But for the most part there was no track whatever. Sometimes there were miles of level grass-land, where travelling was easy and pleasant. At other times there were high, bald ridges to cross, difficult divides to scale; narrow shelves of rock overhanging precipitous cañon walls had to be traversed, where a misstep would have been fatal and a look into the dizzy depths would have made the head reel. The so-called "trail" to Green River was in truth no trail at all, except that certain passes, valleys, gulches, and coulées opened favorably in that direction, and so invited travel.

More than half the long distance had been gone over before there was cause for alarm. Then one morning Phil discovered Indian pony tracks on the margin of the stream by which he had camped through the night. Every faculty was wide awake on the instant. Those tracks spelled danger. He examined them carefully, and followed them for some distance down the stream. At length he stopped, holding up an arrow which some careless Indian rider had dropped.

"Crows!" he said, as he examined the feathered shaft and noted the peculiarity of the spiral grooves cut in the wood. "They're bad enough, but better than Blackfeet. They were here yesterday, for the tracks are fresh; and of course they were here before I came,

or I should have seen them. They've gone on down the river, and likely they won't give me any trouble."

Knowing now what he had to guard against, Phil replaced the arrow in the exact position in which he had found it. Then, for an Indian eye is keen, he tried to remove every evidence of his visit to that spot, as he beat a hasty retreat. He could not conceal the fact that his ponies had been at the little river, but was forced to hope that as the Indian ponies had been there also, the signs would not be observed. He did what he could to obliterate every mark of his camp; then hastily packed up, and, mounting his own animal, led the others into the stream.

Instead of crossing directly to the opposite bank, he waded the ponies up the stream for a long distance, and sought the other shore at a point where the character of the surface would best conceal the hoof-marks. Nevertheless, he was so uneasy that he set out at as rapid a pace as possible when he had left the little stream behind.

He thought it likely that the Indians had pitched camp the previous evening at no great distance. In that case it was more than possible that the one who had dropped the arrow would, on discovering his loss, retrace his way to find it. To an Indian of those days an arrow was a valuable possession. It repre-

sented much labor and care, and was not to be replaced easily.

Phil hoped, though, that if the Indian did return to search for his lost arrow, he would be contented with finding it. If he did not look closely, and particularly if he did not advance up the stream to the point where Phil had made his camp, he would never know that laden Cayuse ponies had passed that way. But if he made the discovery, the entire band of thieving Crows would be on Phil's trail before the day was done.

In view of this dreaded possibility, it was now the part of wisdom for the young trapper to push forward as rapidly as he could; so he did not spare the ponies, but hurried them on hour after hour. When noon had come and gone, a fact which his timepiece, the sun, told him, and still there were no signs of pursuit, he began to breathe more freely; yet he kept right on, without the usual halt for food and rest.

It was almost mid afternoon when he made the terrifying discovery that his carefully concealed trail had been picked up and he was being followed. The first hint of this was brought by the whirring wings of a startled grouse. He had for some time been travelling through a rugged rocky country, where the

hillsides were thickly covered with aspens and other small trees. A backward view for any considerable distance was thus cut off. The passage of the ponies had routed a grouse, which had flown backward for a short way along the trail and there alighted. Now it was up again with whirring beat of wing, when apparently there had been nothing to startle it this second time.

Phil stopped his pony in the trail and with rifle held in readiness looked behind him, twisting round in the saddle to do so. All at once he saw some bushes move. He even thought he saw the swaying of an Indian head feather, though that might have been the effect of an overwrought imagination. He heard nothing but the noise of the grouse's wings, and he saw nothing but that movement in the bushes, though he sat in watchful and anxious expectation for more than a minute.

"If a bear or some other animal scared that bird, it would have shown itself by this time," he decided, when he heard and saw nothing further.

So, instead of going on, he dismounted quickly, tied his pony to an aspen, knowing that the other ponies would remain by the lead animal, and climbing to the hillside slipped back to the point from which the grouse had been flushed. Having by a long and

careful survey made sure that no one was in or near the trail, he ventured into it. There he began a search which led him for some distance along the back track. When it was ended he knew what had scared the grouse and what he had to expect.

"The Crow who dropped that arrow came back for it, as I feared he would," was his conclusion. "He saw my trail, in spite of the work I did to hide it. That made him go up the river until he came to my camp. There he found that loaded ponies had passed. It must have taken him some time to find the tracks again, after I left the river, but he found them. Ever since then he has been following me. I have been so careful that he could not tell without seeing me whether my ponies represented an Indian party or not. He had to make sure, and it took him all this time to do it. Now he knows, and he'll go straight back to the Crows with his story. He is on foot, but an Indian on foot can sometimes travel to beat a horse. By morning the whole band will be after me; and as my ponies have heavy loads and theirs probably haven't anything to carry but their owners, it will be a wonder if they can't overtake me."

Phil's face was troubled as he went back to his pony and rode on along the trail, with the pack animals following. The Crow spy had seen the bales of furs,

and had discovered that they had but a single defender, and that a boy. No band of Crows could resist such a temptation. They would endeavor to overtake and rob him, perhaps kill him; and if they succeeded, they would dispose of the furs themselves at a trading post.

Until some better plan came to him, the only thing for Phil to do was to travel straight on at the best speed possible. But in spite of all he could do to hurry them the ponies lagged, for they had gone without food since morning and had been given no noon rest. Nevertheless, the alarmed boy urged them forward as rapidly as he could until near sunset, when, coming to a stream where some rich grass grew, he thought it the part of wisdom to stop there for a time, cook something for himself, and let the ponies graze.

The way over which he had come that day had been of such a character that he could not hide the trail the ponies made, so he had not tried to do anything of the kind. Now, because it could not make his situation worse, he shot a deer that came down to the stream to drink. Such portions of it as he thought he could use he cut away; the rest of it he rolled into the stream. Of this venison he ate, and cooked strips of it to take with him in his further flight.

When the moon rose, some two or three hours later, he crossed the stream and set out again, shaping his

course by the stars, like the ancient mariners. The wiry little ponies were so much refreshed that they travelled well now, and for many hours Phil kept them going.

As morning drew on he went into camp again. The ponies could not travel forever without rest and food. Though sure that the Crows would follow him, he did not think they were near, so ventured to catch a brief rest. He overslept, and the sun was shining brightly in his face when he awoke. He leaped to his feet with a nervous start. Then he stood for a time listening, and after that walked some distance along the backward trail. The morning was serene and beautiful, the sunshine bright and warm. Round some of the nearer mountain peaks wisps of clouds floated and hung like tattered white drapery. Gophers whistled in the grass, and birds sang. The whole mountain landscape was like a dream of peace.

Yet, back there somewhere, just where he could only guess, Phil Curtis knew that the Crows were dogging his trail, with a never failing persistence. Returning to camp, he hurried preparations for departure, and a little later was again jogging on as fast as he could go.

All the time, as he had done through all the hours of the previous day, he was searching for some way of escape. His judgment told him that in a straight-ahead

race the Crows must win. But how to fool them, how to throw them off the trail, puzzled him.

Assistance came from an unexpected quarter and in an unexpected way. It was almost noon, and he felt sure the Crows were now not far behind him. The ponies were again lagging, and plainly needed rest. He was riding along a much-used game trail. About him were many fantastic buttes and those singular forms of time-worn rock which men in later times have named the "Hoodooos." The country was wild and broken, much cut by small cañons, gulches, and coulées, and somewhat timbered in places.

As Phil passed along he heard loud trampling behind him, and, looking back, beheld a large band of elk descending the trail. His quick mind saw the possibilities in an instant. Drawing his pony sharply out of the trail and guiding him up a bare rocky slope, where his unshod hoofs made no impression, with the other ponies following obediently, he succeeded in gaining the crest of the low divide before the elk were near enough to take fright at his presence.

When they observed the ponies and the rider, though they appeared to be frightened, the well-worn trail offered such attractions that they dashed straight ahead along it, and were soon lost to sight on the lower slopes.

"That wipes out the pony tracks," Phil thought, with intense satisfaction. "Now if I can only get away from here without making another trail before the Crows come!"

He looked about, with critical, anxious eye. Then, instead of returning to the path he had been following, he rode down the slope of the divide, straight away from the game trail. Choosing the barest and rockiest ground he could find, he continued in this way, the pack ponies climbing and scrambling after him like obedient goats.

Within less than half a mile he descended to a stream, where the shores were of the same rocky character. Into this he rode, and followed it up for nearly a mile, keeping the ponies all the while in the water. As he thus passed along he watched for some point where he could take to the shore without making a visible trail.

Finally he came to a side stream, or tributary, and this he followed up for almost a mile more. He was fearing he might find a cañon, as he advanced, and thus be forced to retrace his way; but he came, instead, to a somewhat level, grassy stretch, which was hemmed in by timbered hills. There was a fringe of trees along the stream here, and those that clothed the hills came well down into the valley.

Phil Curtis stopped his pony and looked across the grassy margin of the little river, through the trees, and at the encircling hills. It seemed an inviting place, if he could get into it without leaving some signs to betray the fact that he had sought it for shelter. The Crows would come up this stream and search these banks, as they would ascend and search every stream and bank for many miles.

"There's a little pass over there by which I might get out, if only I could get in," was Phil's thought.

Then native ingenuity came to his aid. His face brightened with hope and determination, when he had thought out his plan. He slipped from the saddle into the cold water, which did not rise above his knees. From one of the packs he took some of the largest furs and some untanned skins. With these in his arms he waded to the shore, leaving the ponies standing in the current.

The bottom of the swift stream was rocky. The low margin was rocky, also, for a few yards back from the water. Cloud bursts and rains had worn and washed away the earth there. Then the grass began, growing in soft, tufted bunches. Here Phil began to spread the skins he had brought from the pack, and in a little while he had stretched a carpet of skins and furs across the grass and out through the trees, until it reached

another rocky area which ran along the base of the hills and terminated in the timbered ground.

It required several visits to the packs to get enough furs for this, and likewise much watching and many low commands to keep the ponies from leaving the water before he had completed his preparations. When all was in readiness, he took the halter of the lead pony, and conducted him with great care out of the water, across the rocky rim of the river, and out upon the carpet of furs and skins. The others, as was their wont, followed without much coaxing, and were led by the clever boy into the shelter of the trees at some distance from the stream.

When they were safely hidden and tethered, Phil ran back to the little river, and with the same care began to remove the furs. Walking backward, beginning at the stream, he gathered them up one by one, straightening up the bunch grass and restoring it as nearly as he could to its normal condition after each skin was removed.

He worked rapidly, but neglected nothing, for the slightest oversight might lead to his detection. Within ten minutes after sheltering and tethering the ponies, he had the furs also hidden under cover of the trees. Only the water on the rocks, showing where the ponies had emerged from the stream, remained to tell of their

passage, and the hot sun would remove that if given time enough.

It was the best that Phil could do. The Crows, he was sure, would follow on down the game trail and look for pony tracks below. If the elk continued in the trail for any great length of time, the Indians would travel a considerable distance and have a long search before they could discover that the pony tracks had disappeared altogether.

Phil's reasoning told him that after they had made that important discovery they would back track and endeavor to find the spot where the ponies had left the game trail. They would know that since ponies walk, and cannot fly, hoof prints must be left by them somewhere. It would be merely a question of covering the ground thoroughly. They would follow up the various trails, and search the banks of the streams. They were indefatigable in such matters, and would not give up readily.

Yet Phil was sure that he was in no immediate danger of discovery. Therefore, as the ponies were ravenously hungry, he untethered them and permitted them to feed on the grass which grew in scattered tufts beneath the trees. They had satisfied their thirst while wading up the stream. Phil also ate and sought some rest for himself, though he was ever on the alert and kept his rifle close at hand.

One thing made him hope for a considerable respite. An Indian is afraid of the darkness and dislikes to travel at night. The shadows of the mountains terrify him. Night gives to the age-worn rocks the appearance of goblins and giants, which in the uncertain light sometimes seem to move. The mind of a savage is in some respects the mind of a child. He exaggerates what he does not see clearly and fears what he does not understand. And to him, when darkness descends on the mountains they are filled with mystery.

For this reason Phil hoped that the Crows had gone into camp at the close of the previous day and would again give over the pursuit with the approach of night. This was but a hope, however; he could not be at all sure of it. These Indians might be of a more courageous mould, or their greed might be so great that they had hurried on in spite of the darkness and the chance of losing the trail of the Cayuse ponies.

Phil felt a great sense of relief when the day ended and he had seen nothing to cause apprehension. His ponies were somewhat rested and were no longer hungry. He had also recovered in some degree from his fatigue. Yet he would not for an instant delude himself into the belief that the Crows had given up the chase. He knew those thieving Indians too well for that.

When morning came, after an anxious and somewhat wakeful night, he dared not take the ponies down to the stream to let them drink, but he permitted them to feed on the grass under the trees. As the morning advanced he tethered them and cut up a skin into nose stalls, which he hoped would keep them from neighing if any of the Crow ponies came near. Then, with rifle in hand, he sat close by the edge of the timber, where he could see the margin of the stream without being seen himself, and began a careful watch.

When the morning had passed and noon came, any boy whose knowledge of Indians was not so great would have been tempted to leave the security of the timber and venture back into the trail. But Phil Curtis maintained his position hour after hour. From the river his eyes wandered constantly to the high ledges and cliffs that encircled the tiny valley. If any Indians were stealing along there, it was more than likely that sooner or later they would rout out some animal or startle some bird, and so give notice of their presence to the watcher below. But not a thing moved; even the wind seemed to sleep. Sleepy the ponies certainly were, some of them standing with eyes closed, others lying down.

All at once a slight splash in the stream caused Phil's nerves to quiver like a taut bowstring when a hand is

laid on it rudely. He knew that light splash might have been made by a leaping fish, but he feared an Indian. Then, as he looked through the screening foliage, he saw a Crow step out from behind a rock and move softly up the stream. He was in hunting-dress, with head feathers, and armed with bow and arrows.

As he waded against the current, moving with extreme caution, he swept the shore on each side of the stream with his burning black eyes. He looked out into the tiny valley, at the timber and at the encircling hills. He examined the grass. He stopped! Phil's heart went into his mouth and the clutch on his rifle tightened. The Indian seemed to be only listening, though his eyes were scanning the grass near the margin of the stream.

Phil glanced anxiously at the ponies. If they made a sound now, if one so much as stamped a hoof to beat away a fly, all would be lost. But they stood in dumb silence, sleepy-eyed, with no knowledge that any human being besides Phil was near. After a careful survey of the timber and the shores, the Crow waded on slowly and soon disappeared up the stream.

The situation had been so perilous and the reaction was so great that when the Indian had passed on out of sight Phil realized that he was covered with perspiration and shaking like a leaf. For a long time he did

not venture to move, fearing that the Crow might come back down the stream; he also feared lest his own motions should arouse the ponies and make them restless. So he sat perfectly still, recovering little by little from his state of extreme nervousness.

When so long a time had elapsed that he was perfectly sure the Crow would not return he rose from his cramped position and walked about under the trees. His mind was busy with plans for leaving the sheltering valley. Some other Crow might go up or down the stream, but Phil did not think it likely, nor did he believe the one who had ascended would return now by that way. He had searched the stream and its banks thoroughly, and had discovered no pony tracks, and it was not probable that he would cover the same course again.

Phil's sense of security increased greatly when night came. The ponies were up and were anxious for water, of which they had been long deprived. It must have seemed strange to them that they were kept back from it when it was so near. Phil held them in restraint, however, until the night was well advanced. Then he formed one of the skins into a sort of water bottle and attempted to bring enough water in that to satisfy them in a measure. He had to work very carefully, and the skin bottle was a poor article indeed;

but by many stealthy visits to the stream he got some water to them, and with that they had to be content.

For two whole days after he had seen the Crow pass up the stream Phil Curtis remained in hiding in the timber with the Cayuse ponies. In that time he did what he could to relieve their thirst, though he only ventured down to the stream in the darkness. It was a long and trying wait for Phil, as well as for the ponies. Not once in all that time did he start a fire to cook anything; for if the Crows were still near, their watchful eyes might see the smoke by day or the shine of the fire by night.

Darkness and silence had fallen over the land when at last he decided to try to leave his hiding-place. That afternoon he had climbed into one of the tallest of the trees, where, screened by the boughs and the leaves, he had made what survey of the surrounding region he could. It seemed to him that the Crows must have departed from the vicinity. Their superstitions, if nothing else, would probably have led them to that, he reasoned. If pack ponies can disappear without leaving hoof print or trail of any kind, there must be something uncanny and unaccountable about them; the thing would be "bad medicine" to the Indian mind, and for that reason the pursuit would be abandoned.

So Phil conducted his little pack train from the valley to the stream, into which the ponies plunged eagerly, thrusting their noses deep into the cool water. Then, wading himself, Phil led them slowly and cautiously down the stream, out to the larger stream, and on down to the trail. No Crows were encountered; nothing barred his way.

The trail was open, so far as he could tell. An hour later he was almost sure he had outwitted his pursuers. By morning he knew it; and after a breakfast and a rest he pushed straight ahead at top speed for Green River.

CHAPTER IV

AT GREEN RIVER

WHEN Phil Curtis arrived at the great trappers' and traders' rendezvous on Green River, he was greeted by a scene that excited his interest and stirred his imagination. To the youth emerging from the great mountain wilderness it was like being transported into a fairyland, where everything was bright and enjoyable, lively and gay.

Two hundred fur traders were there, and two thousand Indians, representing tribes scattered all over the mountain country from the plains to the Pacific coast, together with scores and even hundreds of white trappers. The Indians were camped in villages, the white trappers slept in the open or in rudely constructed huts, while the traders were housed in cabins of logs and in the trading post. A babel of sound filled the air.

In spite of the confusion, the coming and going, the noise of traffic, the quarrelling and carousing, the singing and yelling, the advent of Phil Curtis with his pony

loads of the choicest furs to be found in the mountains did not pass unnoticed. As he threaded his way among the Indian lodges and the trappers' camps, with the laden ponies following, he sat erect, with conscious pride, in the rude Cayuse saddle, and formed a striking picture in the ornamented suit of deerskin given him by Neekomy.

In a little while traders were crowding about him, eager to barter for his furs. Dismounting, he opened some of the packs and displayed the pelts, spreading them out on the ground. He dilated on their good qualities, asked the traders to feel of them and see how soft and silky they were, and how well cured and stretched. He did not want articles in barter, he said, —no clothing nor ornaments, no cloth, guns, axes nor trinkets, only a little powder and ball; he desired to agree with some one upon the value that was to be affixed to the furs, and receive in payment for them an order for money on the Hudson Bay Company's agent, McLoughlin, at Vancouver.

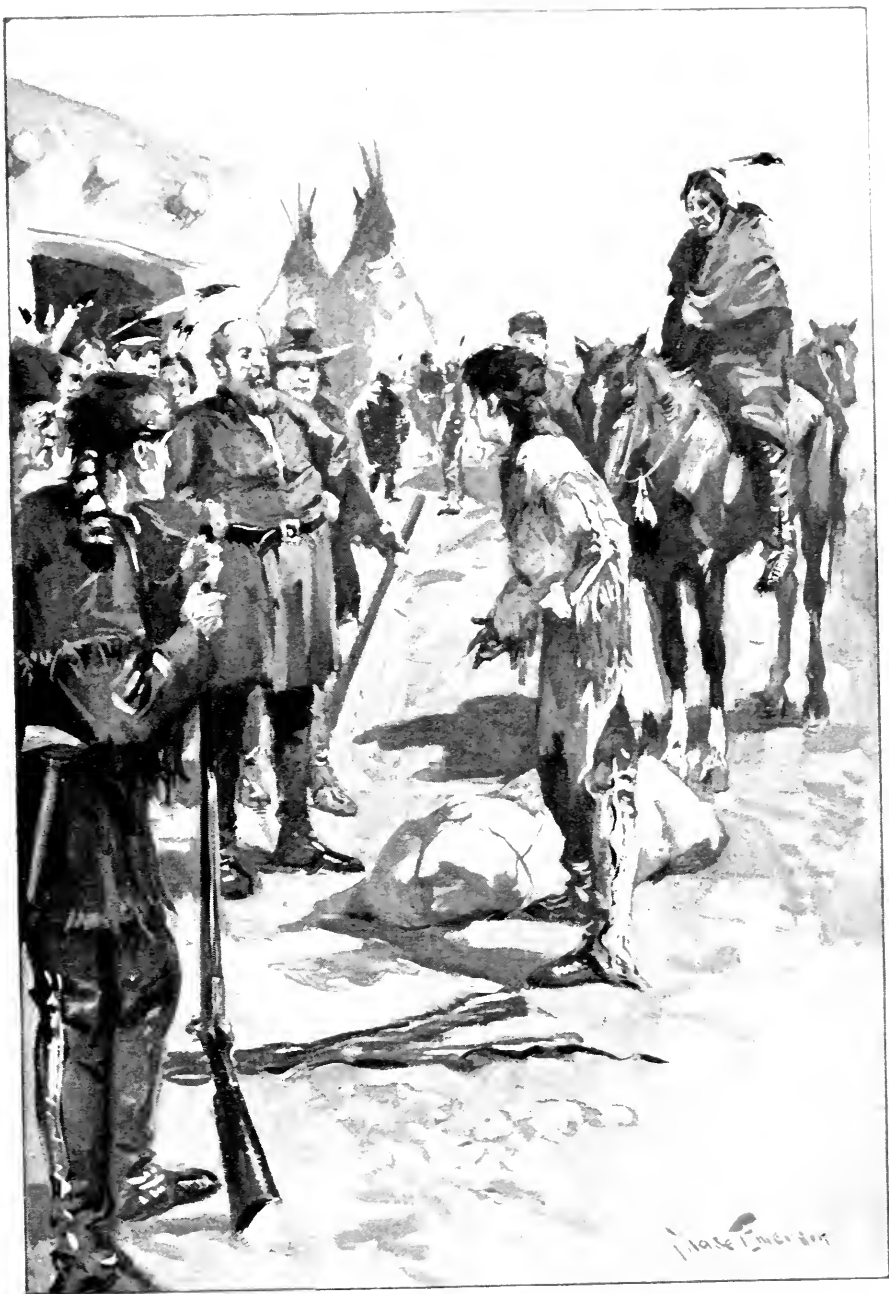
A Hudson Bay Company's representative stepped out of the crowd and announced his readiness to comply with this request.

Phil spent several hours with this agent of the Company, for the furs were many and valuable. The boy was a shrewd, keen trader, and was stimulated by the

knowledge that his father expected him to dispose of the skins to the best advantage. The Hudson Bay man, a canny Scot, was equally anxious to get them at the lowest price, and so please his employers. Indian methods were employed, a fur at a time being produced, haggled over, Phil praising it and displaying its good points, the trader pointing out with unfailing accuracy its defects, until finally a price was agreed on, a memorandum made, and the fur was added to the pile that had been accepted.

The beaver skin was the unit of value. Two marten or two otter skins were worth five beaver skins, one beaver skin was worth those of two white foxes; and for the skins of bears, deer, mink, and of all other animals the value was fixed by their worth in beaver skins.

Though Phil had stipulated that he must have an order for currency on the Hudson Bay factor at Vancouver, the Indians and most of the trappers disposed of their furs in barter. Money they could not use; but they could use knives, guns, ammunition, traps, articles of clothing, and hundreds of other things, including much trumpery in the way of cheap ornament. In this sort of barter, one beaver skin would buy a red handkerchief or a hunting-knife, two would purchase an axe, while a rifle, according to its make, style, and workmanship, was valued at from ten to thirty or more.



"INDIANS AND TRAPPERS HAD GATHERED ABOUT THEM."

Before Phil had concluded his trafficking with the Hudson Bay representative, many Indians and trappers had gathered about them and the piles of furs, looking on curiously, commenting, laughing, or asking questions. Suddenly he heard a voice and a pronunciation that struck him strangely, and looking round he beheld Tom McKay, an old trapper friend of his father.

“Hey, lad!” said McKay, pushing forward out of the crowd, with extended right hand. “To see ye lookin’ so hale an’ hearty an’ han’some tickles me as much as if I’d run a splinter in my foot!”

McKay was angular and sharp-featured, with peering bright eyes. His clothing was soiled buckskin. In a belt about his waist he carried a knife and tomahawk; his left hand held his long rifle. And it was a wonderful rifle! The long curved stock, which extended the whole length of the gun, was studded at the breech with brass nails set in fanciful patterns. The breech held also a metal case for the greased patching which went over the bullets; and breech and stock were colored here and there, in the Indian fashion, with streaks of red ochre. Tom McKay was noted as a marvellous shot with that long rifle. “At one hundred paces he could drive a dozen balls through a Spanish dollar or knock off a duck’s head at one hundred and twenty yards.”

He was a Hudson Bay man, — that is, he acknowledged

a sort of allegiance to the factor of the Hudson Bay Company at Fort Vancouver; and he now looked keenly at the agent with whom Phil had been dickering, as if to question whether the trader had been trying to overreach the son of his old friend.

Phil had leaped to his feet when he beheld McKay, and clasped the hand of the veteran trapper and mountain man with much warmth of feeling.

Having received his order for payment on the factor at Vancouver, Phil walked joyously away with McKay.

"Lad, I'm here with Jo Meek," said the latter, as they walked on. "Some Injuns are here, too, from the Oregon country — Nez Percés and Cayuses and other ruck of that kind. How's the father?"

"He isn't well," said Phil, with a shade of sadness.

Then he proceeded to tell why he had come on to the trading rendezvous alone, leaving his father with the Cayuse band in the mountains.

"That's all right," said McKay, almost as if the information pleased him. "'Twill take more than a bit of mountain fever to knock out a man like your father. We're all going down to the Columby, — Jo Meek, and myself, and the Injuns, and some other trappers; but he'll be there, I don't doubt, before we will. You must go with our party."

"I shall be glad to; and I'm glad to know there are

some Cayuses here," was Phil's answer. "I'm a Cayuse myself now!"

McKay stopped and looked at him.

"Just how?" he said. "I don't see any paint and feathers. You look a good deal like a white lad to me. Injuns are all right; Jo Meek's got an Injun wife, and a good many of the other trappers the same; but for myself, I prefer to have such a friend as you, or your father, white."

Then Phil told of his adoption into the Indian band of Tilskit, and of the accident and rescue which had led to his becoming Timuitti's brother, to all of which Tom McKay listened with grave attention.

"That's heap good, as the Injuns say," he commented. "Those Cayuses are the greatest pony Injuns in Oregon; it won't do you any harm to be a Cayuse, and some time it may help. We'll go over to the Cayuse lodges, where I'll introduce you and tell this story, and we'll have a talk with your new relations. Come along; Jo Meek is over there."

CHAPTER V

MARCUS WHITMAN

IN that talk Phil Curtis heard for the first time the name of Marcus Whitman. These Cayuses and Nez Percés, he discovered, had journeyed all the way from the Columbia to Green River to meet a man named Marcus Whitman, who was coming to tell them all about the White Man's Book.

When it was reported that Whitman and his party were near, and would soon reach the rendezvous, the Indian delegation from the Columbia made ready to greet him in all the glory of their holiday attire. Their beautiful spotted ponies were brought out and decked with paint and feathers, dyed horsetail ornaments and bits of gay cloth. The Indians themselves were barbaric in their splendor.

Phil accompanied the Cayuses and Nez Percés, as did Tom McKay, Jo Meek, and many trappers, as well as representatives of the Green River fur traders, when they rode out in their fluttering finery to meet the great "Boston."

All white men from the states were "Bostons" to the Indians of the Columbia. The Columbia River had been explored and named by a Boston sea captain, and the early traders were largely from Boston. The language used by these Indians in their traffic with the whites was a jargon of Indian words and phrases mixed with English words and corruptions of words, in which "Boston" figured prominently.

When Whitman and his party came in sight, it was seen to be but a small company, creeping along with a rickety wagon which contained the camping outfit and provisions. Three men and two Nez Percé boys were walking in the dust of the trail, driving some cattle and the horses that drew the wagon. High on two tired horses rode two women. Behind all came a band of trappers with whom Whitman had journeyed from the Platte River.

A faint memory of his mother stirred when Phil beheld the clear, white complexion of Narcissa Whitman and the delicate, refined beauty of Eliza Spalding. The two women were brides, and this was their wedding trip — a trying journey across the continent over the hot plains where, roamed the warlike Sioux, Cheyennes, and Pawnees, and on and on, until now they had crossed the terrible mountains, the first white women to surmount the barrier of the great Rockies.

The Indians were astonished when they saw those two women. Narcissa's bright hair seemed to them to be of spun gold. They gazed at her as if she were a spirit descended from the skies. Then some of them began to say that she must certainly be ill, she looked so very white! No one could be so white, they thought, and be in good health. Yet Narcissa Whitman's health was of the best, and in spite of her weariness her spirits were bounding with enthusiasm.

Whitman and his missionary companion presented quite a striking contrast to the rough mountain men and trappers with their long hair and greasy buckskins with whom Phil was so well acquainted. Whitman, young, ruddy, blue-eyed, was arrayed in a suit of dusty black. Spalding, tall and slender, was also clothed in black.

The Indians yelled their delight and pranced their ponies in welcome. The chiefs and head men, the leading trappers and the representatives of the traders, moved forward to greet Whitman and his companions. The Nez Percé boys who were driving some of Whitman's cows forgot their charges and rushed to greet their relatives from the Columbia.

Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding looked on with astonishment and perhaps with a feeling of trepidation when they saw those prancing spotted ponies and

the flying feathers and ornaments of the Indians, and heard the yells of the half-wild assembly. But they preserved an outward coolness and gave kindly greeting to all who approached them.

That afternoon Phil talked with Tom McKay about the East, from which Whitman's party had come, and about the work which Whitman intended to do on the Columbia.

"I can't give you any too many p'int's," said McKay, as he sat with Phil and wrought a pair of moccasins, "because I don't know any too much about it myself. All I know is that these people are what they call missionaries, and are goin' out into the Oregon country to preach to the Injuns and to start what they call mission schools. The Methydist's started a mission school 'mong the Nez Percés on the Columby three years ago; you may've heard of it. 'Twas started by two brothers, Jason and David Lee, who came out to the mouth of the Columby with ol' Nathan'el Wyeth, the Boston fur trader. It done a heap of good, I'm told, and is runnin' yit."

"Could a white boy study in their schools?" Phil asked, after a time of thought.

"Why, lad, I s'pose he might, if they was willin' and he wanted to."

That night in the trapper's hut, listening to the

heavy breathing of Tom McKay and Jo Meek, Phil lay a long time thinking of this. Though all the lore of the trapper and mountain man was at his fingers' ends, and even though he could converse with half the tribes of the mountain and coast Indians in their own tongues, he was marvellously ignorant of the kind of knowledge which is the peculiar possession of the white man. He was conscious of his ignorance, too, though he did not realize how deep it was.

Phil had been born at Independence, on the Missouri River. It was then but a trapping and trading post; yet his mother had lived there. She had died when he was a small boy, and he did not remember her very well. From Independence, at a later period, he had been brought to a more Western trading post, where he had lived a long time with the trader's family. He recalled other homes he had dwelt in; but all of them were traders' or trappers' homes, or Indian lodges. Much of the time, since he had grown old and strong enough, had been spent with his father on the trapping grounds or on long, perilous journeys.

With the dawn Phil Curtis was out. Many of the Indians and trappers were astir. Smoke from breakfast fires was rising in the clear morning air. One of the largest and best of the Cayuse lodges had been set apart for the missionaries. After a time, seeing smoke

rise from it, Phil walked toward it, impelled by a desire to have a talk with Marcus Whitman. Some Indians were lounging about the entrance, among them a few squaws who were trying to satisfy their curiosity by staring in now and then in the hope of seeing the strange white women.

As Phil Curtis approached the lodge, Narcissa Whitman came to the entrance, and, observing him, invited him in.

"Have a seat," said Whitman, rising and offering him an apology for a stool. "I think I saw you with the trappers who came out to meet us yesterday."

"And I'll take your cap," said Narcissa, looking with admiration at Phil's embroidered and ornamented suit of buckskin.

"I've been told you're going down to the Columbia," said Phil, feeling awkward as he gave his cap to Narcissa and took the stool. "I'm going that way myself, with Tom McKay, Jo Meek, and some others."

"Are you acquainted with the Oregon country?" said Whitman, interested at once.

"Well acquainted with it," Phil answered. "My father is on his way there now; I've been here selling furs, and I shall follow him, going by the regular trail. It's the trail you are to go by, I've heard."

Instantly Whitman and Spalding began to question

him concerning the Oregon country. They wanted to know just what its nature was and all about the Indians who inhabited it.

Phil's knowledge was very full on those points, he was glad to know. Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding took part in this catechising.

"See here," said Whitman, suddenly, "you're just the one we want to go with us ; you know more about that country and those Indians than any one I've seen yet."

"He's more willing to tell, anyway," said Narcissa, brightly.

Phil flushed with pleasure.

"I've been thinking that maybe I'd like to go into your mission school, when you start it, to study books, you know, and to learn about the states, and the way white people do. Though I'm white, I don't know many of the things white people know, I'm afraid ; what I know is mostly the things that Indians learn, and trappers."

"My dear boy," said Narcissa, her face beaming, "I shall be only too glad to teach you whatever I can. It will be a real pleasure to me."

Eliza Spalding said the same.

"I heard some queer stories, from the Cayuses and Nez Percés, as to why you came," said Phil, after he had thanked them.

“It’s a wonderful story,” Marcus Whitman declared, “a perfectly wonderful story. The thing is almost unbelievable, yet it’s true. Those Indians sent a delegation of four chiefs all the way from Oregon to the city of St. Louis in search of information concerning the Bible, of which they had heard. Catlin, the artist, met two of the chiefs on the Missouri River, while they were on their return, travelled with them for a long distance, and made pictures of them. Only two of them started back for the Columbia, for two of them died in St. Louis the winter after their arrival there. Of the two who started on the return trip, only one lived to reach home. And he arrived without any white man with him to tell his people the story of the White Man’s Book, as they called it.

“The story of that journey of the Cayuse Indians to St. Louis in search of some one who could tell their people all about the Bible was published. It stirred us, for it was like that call which Paul heard. ‘Come over into Macedonia and help us!’ We answered the call, and we are here.”

Marcus Whitman’s face was shining as he left off speaking. His enthusiasm was so great and so infectious that all felt it.

“And you must go with us!” said Narcissa Whitman. “This meeting with you here is certainly provi-

dential. You know the Indian languages, of which we are still ignorant. While we teach you, you can teach us. Oh, you must go!"

"Anything troublin' you, lad?" said Tom McKay, meeting Phil near the lodge a little later.

"No," Phil answered.

"Well, I thought you seemed a bit excited."

"Perhaps I am," said Phil. "I've had a talk with Mr. Whitman and the other members of his party, and I'm going down the trail with them to the Columbia."

"We're all goin' down that trail to the Columby, and goin' when they go, likely."

"Yes, but I'm to help them in their talks with the Indians, and they're to take me into their mission school, where I'm to learn things, — learn about books, get an education, if father is willing."

McKay looked at his young friend earnestly.

"Lad, I think ye're right! Education is a great thing. I haven't got any too much of it myself, but I've got enough to know that. Never fear but your father will see it as you do. He'll be more than willin'."

Whitman and his party remained at Green River two weeks to rest. During that time the Columbia River Indians did everything possible to demonstrate their delight and good-will. They sent hunting parties

into the mountains, and fishing parties to the river, and kept Whitman's table loaded with game and fish. Finally they induced the other Indians at the trading rendezvous to join them in a great war tournament, in which all appeared in fluttering feathers and wonderful head-dresses, their bodies daubed with paint, executing many Indian evolutions on their beautiful ponies. The tournament was concluded with a grand charge of six hundred armed and mounted braves in all the glory of war-paint, yelling as only Indians can yell. It was certainly a realistic demonstration — almost too realistic for the mental comfort of Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding, who showed some nervousness when this yelling line of painted warriors came charging toward them.

When Whitman started on toward the Columbia, he was accompanied by a body of trappers led by Tom McKay and Jo Meek, and including Phil Curtis. Phil had the fur trader's order on the Vancouver factor stowed snugly away in an inner pocket of his hunting-shirt. Mounted on the handsomest of the Cayuse ponies, — he had sold the others he brought with him from Tilskit's village, — he rode at the side of Tom McKay near the head of the trapper column, and his heart was light.

At Fort Hall the Hudson Bay factor tried to dis-

suade Whitman from attempting to take his wagon farther, picturing in strong terms the difficulties of the way. But Whitman knew why he wanted to take that wagon as far as he could, and he went on with it to Fort Boise.

At Walla Walla, Phil had news of his father.

"Ay, yes," said Monsieur Pambrun, the factor, "your father was here with some Cayuse Indians and has gone on to Vancouver. He arrived but three days ago, and left yesterday. Monsieur Curtis spoke of his son, who was to come; and you are he? You are welcome; and he is quite well again, he told me to say to you."

Seaward from Walla Walla in canoes floated Whitman and his companions, until, through palisaded heights and mountainous cañon walls, where the Columbia roared and frothed like the sea, they arrived by and by at their destination.

The continent had been crossed by Marcus Whitman, and with his coming to the Columbia and to Fort Vancouver a new era had come to Oregon.

CHAPTER VI

THE WHITE-HEADED EAGLE OF THE COLUMBIA

THE great Columbia ruffled its surface until the white caps tossed their spray. Monique, the Iroquois boatman, tall and lithe, straight as an Oregon pine, his black hair floating snakily from under its head-band, brown body and brown arms moving, eagle eye fixed on the shore, poised and dipped his shining paddle; and every oarsman dipped with him, pulling for the land where stood Fort Vancouver. Like the landing at Plymouth, this arrival of Whitman and his party was a historic event long to be remembered.

On the shore, in the midst of a throng composed of Indians with fluttering head-dresses, gay Canadian boatmen with swart faces and hair bound about with scarlet handkerchiefs, women in Indian garb and in silks and laces, stood the noted Hudson Bay factor, John McLoughlin, the White-headed Eagle of the Columbia, as the Indians called him, ready to welcome the strangers. White as the drifted snow was the hair of the great white chief; perils in the Western wilds

had whitened it in a night! Stately and grand he looked, in his blue cloth coat with its two rows of bright silver buttons, and that sweep of snowy hair flowing down on his broad shoulders. At his side stood John Curtis, the father of Phil, the trapper boy.

Monique, poising his paddle as a cheer of welcome rocked the air, drove the nose of his canoe against the shore. The other canoes followed; the waiting crowd swarmed down to the boats, and the occupants, some laughing, some almost crying, were shaking hands with friends and loved ones, from whom many had been long separated. Phil was in his father's arms.

How well John Curtis was looking! Phil saw that, with delight, at the first glance. The weakness which had prostrated him had passed away and he was again the bronzed and lusty woodsman, sinewy of body, stout of heart, and keen of eye.

"Ay, you're good to look on, boy!" he cried. "And I'm well, Heaven be thanked! Ah, and there's McKay, and Jo Meek, and Baptiste Latour!"

Into the clerks' quarters, called Bachelors' Hall, John Curtis led Phil, followed by McKay and others. There the boy told of the incidents of his trip to Green River, of the sale of the furs, and produced the order on the Vancouver factor.

"You did well, Phil," said his father, when he had heard the story and received the slip of paper; "as well as I could have done myself. And I knew that you would."

Madame McLoughlin and her daughter, Eloise, dressed as nearly as possible in London fashion, made Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding comfortable in the well-furnished parlor and sitting room of the fort.

That night the walls of the old post at Vancouver were greeted with strange music. Usually they had echoed to the songs of Indian boatmen, trappers, and Canadian voyageurs; the rafters had rung with Scotch and English melodies, and with patriotic and sentimental airs. Now they gave back the sweet tones of Narcissa Whitman, as she sang the songs which missionaries love. More than forty years afterward, men who heard her that night spoke of her singing in words of praise.

"She's got the voice of an angel," said rough Tom McKay, whose heart was like that of a woman. "Ay, lad, and she looks like an angel, with her hair of gold and cheeks like lilies. It almost makes one a Christian to know that such a woman would come to a country like this to try to lift up and civilize such people as Injuns."

Phil Curtis had not fit words in which to express the pleasure he felt. As for McLoughlin, Phil would have found himself equally at a loss if he had tried to express in words his admiration of this man. For years he had known him as his father's best friend.

For a thousand miles McLoughlin was the greatest name on the lips of men. Assiniboins spoke of him in their lodges on what are now the Manitoban plains; farther to the eastward Crees and Ojibways sounded his praises; in Eskimo igloos the fur-dressed trappers of the frozen Arctic acknowledged his sway, and the wild Utes and wilder Blackfeet feared his power. For he was chief factor of the great Hudson Bay Fur Company, and at that time the Hudson Bay Fur Company ruled the Northwestern wilderness. His dominion was an empire in extent and wealth, almost unknown except to a few men who managed the Company from their London offices, and if not unknown, almost completely ignored and wholly undervalued by the people of the United States and the authorities at Washington.

Over his wild realm McLoughlin wielded the sceptre of an autocrat. He could be iron, when crime had to be punished. But his rule was one of mildness and conciliation. The gates of his fort—and that fort had the strength of a castle of the Middle Ages—were thrown wide open in welcome to all who came in

friendship. His hospitality was given with a liberality as unstinted as his kindness. He sought to deal honorably with all men; he was not grasping, nor covetous, but generous and liberal, whether he was trafficking with a trapper or treating with a refractory Indian chief.

Such a man was McLoughlin, the White-headed Eagle of the Columbia, who ruled his vast empire of mountains, forests, and plains for a quarter of a century, his sceptre of iron and fire concealed in the velvet of kind words and gracious deeds.

It had been the intention of Marcus Whitman to locate at the Dalles, where the Columbia narrows in a rocky cleft. Here salmon were to be found in prodigious numbers, and here crowded the fishing Indians by thousands every season.

"The Dalles Indians are treacherous and unreliable," said McLoughlin. "Go up among the Indians of the Walla Walla; they are the finest tribe in this part of the continent."

Back to the Walla Walla went Whitman, accompanied by Phil Curtis and others. Spalding went to the Clearwater, to start a mission among the Nez Percés. Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding remained for a time at Vancouver.

The Cayuse Indians knew of Whitman's coming, and

awaited him in great numbers at Wailatpu (the Land of the Rye Grass). Timuitti was there, with Tilskit and Neekomy, and they greeted Phil joyously. A cavalcade of Cayuses followed Whitman and his companions as they rode through the tall rye grass, looking for a site for the mission. They were accompanied by their chiefs, Five Crows and his brother Tautau; Tiloukaikt, whose face was almost black and whose voice rang out like a bugle; Tilskit, Phil's Indian foster father; and the noted Pio-pio-mox-mox, whose name meant Yellow Serpent.

With Pio-pio-mox-mox was his son, a brave, handsome boy, who was dressed in the finery of an Indian, but who bore the name of Elijah. He had been attending the Methodist mission school a year now, and had there been baptized by Jason Lee, who had given him the name of Elijah Hedding.

Probably another such group never rode forth to select a location for a Christian school. Phil Curtis, in his ornamented suit of buckskin, was not half so striking in appearance as Elijah, the son of Pio-pio-mox-mox; and the gorgeousness of Elijah's raiment was dulled when it was compared with the fluttering head feathers, the ornamental stripes of paint, the fringed and beaded leggings and moccasins, and the brass-circleted wrists and ankles of many of the men and

women of those Cayuse bands. And the beautiful spotted ponies! They were painted and feathered as wonderfully as their riders. The cavalcade was warlike in appearance, too, though its mission was peace; for the Indian braves carried bows and arrows, guns, lances, and tomahawks.

Fort Vancouver was far away on the Columbia; and Walla Walla, where dwelt the nearest white man, was distant too. Scattered on the fringe of the rye grass meadow, and dotting the surrounding hills, were the conical skin lodges of the Cayuses, while their ponies grazed on the level plains and beside the river in great herds.

Before even a comfortable shelter was provided, Whitman began his work of teaching and preaching. The Indians flocked in crowds to hear him.

Those early days at Waiilatpu were happy days to Phil. Timuitti joined him in the work which Whitman planned. The two went along the river, where they selected trees and hacked at them to fell them. They pulled at the saws in the work of ripping boards. Whenever Whitman found a breathing space in which he could give Phil instruction, Timuitti stood by, apparently with as great a desire for an education as the boy whom he proudly called his white brother.

In the month of December, 1836, Marcus Whitman

brought his wife to the new mission at Waiilatpu. The Cayuses swarmed in from the hills when they heard of her arrival. Soon a school was organized, with Phil and Timuitti among the pupils.

Elijah came down from the Columbia about Christmas, and he and the other two boys made a hunting trip into the mountains. Though they went gladly, it was at Whitman's request to procure a winter supply of game, and they took ponies on which to pack the venison they hoped to bring back with them. Joseph, having made his appearance at the mission with some wandering Nez Percés, also joined the hunting party of which Phil was the acknowledged leader. As Chief Joseph, the bright, kindly boy became in after years a famous Nez Percé war chief.

The Oregon country was a very paradise for the hunter. It is little wonder that the Cayuses and Nez Percés loved the land which was their home, for its rivers swarmed with the finest of fish; and in numbers almost as incredible deer, elk, and antelopes roamed the plains, the mountains, and the forests.

Phil Curtis was a skilled hunter, and the Indian boys came of a hunting race. The game-filled mountains and plains were open before them to go where they willed, and they could not go amiss. They were masters of the rifle and of the bow and arrow. Phil could draw

an arrow to the head on the strongest Indian bow and send it with aim as true as Elijah, Timuitti, or Joseph.

It was glorious sport riding through the mountains, and by the rivers where the tall grass flaunted. Though there was snow on the mountains, there was none in the valleys. Game was everywhere. Even the bears were still nosing about, grubbing for roots and hunting for dried berries. Throughout the clear bright days the boys hunted; at night they camped wherever they chanced to be, building their fire and cooking their cuts of juicy venison, of elk or bear's meat, on the glowing coals, or spitted on green sticks held in the snapping blaze.

When they returned to Waiilatpu their ponies were laden with the results of the hunt. Flour was exorbitantly high at Walla Walla, and luxuries were not to be had at all; but there was now a bountiful supply of the choicest game, and dried fish was plentiful. So no one was likely to go hungry.

The school went on, and the preaching. The Cayuses and many Nez Percés thronged to hear Narcissa Whitman sing. If they did not understand the words, they could not miss the message of sweetness and kindness which the music held. And Phil Curtis, applying himself with diligence to his studies, made progress that the Whitmans regarded as marvellous.

But Marcus Whitman's efforts to induce the Cayuses to settle near him in something like a permanent village and farm the rich valley land were not very successful.

"Why should we do this?" was their demand. "When we want the wapato, which you call the Indian potato, all we have to do is to wait until the winter rains are over, when our women can go into the marshes and dig them for us. When we want the camas roots, we have but to wait until in the summer the stalks die to the ground, and the camas are ready for the digging, and our squaws do the work—it is not man's work to dig; it is not man's work to do what you call farming. And it is not needed, for our camas and wapato grow without our labor.

"When the waters rush roaring into the rivers from the sea, the salmon come in such numbers that they almost squeeze the water out of the streams, and we have but to take them—take all we need. In the mountains, in the woods, everywhere on the land, our guns and our bows and arrows bring us down game,—bears, deer, elk, antelopes, buffalo,—why should we rear animals for food? We rear our Cayuse ponies; is not that enough? We hunt the deer in the hills, and the buffalo beyond the Snake River; the mountains are filled with berries which are to be had for the gathering.

“And we do not like to live long in one place. It is not the life we love. We like to move to the Columbia when the salmon run; we like to live in the cool mountains when the berries ripen; we like to wander beyond the Snake where the buffalo herd; we like to camp on the prairie when the nights are dry and the stars snap in the sky like coals of fire, and the wind sings its song in the tall grass. We do not care for a house that cannot be moved; our lodges, which we can set up here to-day and take down to-morrow, are much better.”

So the Cayuses came and departed, and came again and departed. For weeks at a time Phil Curtis would see nothing of his Indian brother, Timuitti, nor of Tilskit or Neekomy; then he would awake some morning to find Timuitti knocking on his door, and Neekomy and Tilskit grinning in the yard, while out just beyond by the river their lodge would be pitched, with perhaps other lodges about it, and the ponies grazing peacefully on the rye grass.

Nevertheless the mission at Waiilatpu was not unsuccessful, though it did not accomplish all that Whitman hoped for. Phil Curtis not only shot up to the verge of manhood, but became as well educated as any youth of his age whose early years had not been neglected. But were those early years neglected—

wasted? Surely not! For now, in addition to the ordinary education which every boy in a civilized land receives, he had accumulated a marvellous store of mountain lore and wisdom.

He knew how the Blackfeet transport their villages, how the mountain partridge builds her nest, how the doe hides her young, when the buffalo herds move and why, the difference between a Pawnee arrow and the arrow of the Sioux, in what way an Assiniboin snowshoe resembles the snowshoe of a Cree, why some Indian tribes make their bows of elkhorn and others of hickory, and the thousand and one other things which his father had taught him, or he had learned by observation and experience.

So in a peculiar and most important sense Phil Curtis possessed a rare and valuable education, which might stand him in good stead in perilous times, and in all times would be a source of gratification.

John Curtis visited his son at the mission school frequently, but for himself he was too much wedded to the trapper life to care to give it up for anything that civilization could offer. Yet he was proud of Phil, and took especial delight in his advancement in knowledge.

Tom McKay, Jo Meek, and other trappers also stopped at the mission school on their trips to and fro between the mountains and Vancouver.

“ Ay, lad, ye’ll be a great man some day, I have no doubt,” said McKay, characteristically. “ Education is a great thing. I haven’t any too much of it myself, but I have enough to know that.”

CHAPTER VII

PROPHETS OF EVIL

STANDING one day with Timuitti and Elijah, before Tilskit's lodge, by the silver Walla Walla, Phil Curtis heard a queer sound. The ponies, grazing in the rye grass, heard it also. They threw up their heads, listened, then ran, snorting.

Timuitti was tall and straight now, a handsome youth, though Indian in every feature. Elijah was also tall, even handsomer, and much better educated, for he seemed to have a natural liking for the white man's books. But even he, much as he knew, could not tell what that strange clicking meant. It was not a clicking of horns or hoofs, nor even the squeaking of a Cayuse saddle.

The boys stepped round the lodge quickly and looked in the direction of the sound. Old Tilskit came out hurriedly, and he, too, looked.

"Horse canoe!" he exclaimed, in much surprise.

Over the slight rise came a wagon drawn by ponies — the very one which Marcus Whitman had left at Fort

Boise so long before. Jo Meek sat on the driver's seat, wielding the lash. In the wagon behind him were his Indian wife and children.

Whitman came out when he heard the shouts. Seeing the wagon and recognizing it as his, his face lighted with pleasure, and he went up to Meek, holding out his hand in congratulation.

"Thought I'd bring it through," said Meek. "Allowed it would make the travelling easier fer th' wife an' babies; but if I'd knowed what a job it would be, I reckon I'd left it behind at Boise."

"Well, I must thank you for bringing it through," said Whitman, and it seemed that he spoke with strange earnestness. "I wanted to prove to everybody that a wagon could be brought over the mountains from the states. You have finished the work for me. And now we have the proof. A wagon can come through to this point from the East—this wagon has come through! Where one wagon can go, others can go. It will encourage all those people who will want to come, and there are many of them. In a few years, Jo, this valley will contain thousands of people!"

The Cayuses were crowding thickly about to look at the wonderful "horse canoe." When Jo Meek snapped his whip and the ponies drew the wagon forward, the Indians fell back in alarm and astonishment. It was a

mystery — a canoe moving over the ground on those queer rollers! Some of them had heard of that unbelievable thing, and there were a few who had seen the like; yet it was a mystery, a strange mystery. They shook their heads, they talked rapidly, and pointed at it as it rolled along. “Click-a-lick-lick!” they said, in imitation of the sound it made. “Yes, it was medicine; and it might be bad medicine. These white men did strange things; they were wizards!”

Jo Meek announced that he was tired of trapping, and meant to settle down in the valley of the Willamette.

“The beaver air gittin’ so scarce in the mountains that trappin’ don’t pay any more,” he said. “I think I’ll try farmin’; you’ve got a mill here now, and there’s one at Vancouver. Game is gittin’ scarcer, too, as well as beaver.”

The story of the wonderful “horse canoe” went from lip to lip among the Cayuses and the Nez Percés; it reached even to the wilder tribes in the mountains and far to the northward. And with that story went the statement of Whitman, dropped unguardedly no doubt, that soon there would be thousands of white men in the valley of the Walla Walla. Jo Meek had said the beaver were becoming scarce and the game scarce, too; and white men were coming!

The statement was exaggerated, as all stories are

which pass in that manner from mouth to mouth. Soon the Indians began to hear that the white men who were to come would take all their land away from them, kill off all the game, spear and slay all the salmon, and, having deprived the Indians of food, would reduce them to slavery, and make them grind grain in the mills and follow the ploughs in the fat soil of the river valleys.

“It is as I told you!” squeaked the old Indian sorceress, Waskema. “When the first white man came over the mountains, I said to you that he was like the first salmon, and that in a little while others would follow him. You have seen the hunters increase in the hills until now the beaver are gone and the deer are being slain by their long-shooting guns. Doct’ Whit’n ploughs up the ground and kills the camas roots. Soon we shall have to become white people ourselves, or starve.”

Waskema was withered, wrinkled, and old. She had strange powers, the Indians believed; she could foretell the future, she could fall into a sleep and behold wonderful visions, she could mix roots and herbs into decoctions that would set fire to the tongue and take the breath from the body, she communicated with spirits and talked familiarly with demons. She hobbled about with a bent stick for a staff, peering out with burning eyes, her sunken lips moving and muttering marvellous

wisdom. The tribe feared her; she had power to make them marvel, and they believed in her.

From the first she had prophesied that evil would come with the coming of the white man. She had learned to hate Whitman and his mission school. The success of his teachings lessened her influence as a sorceress. She claimed to be a healer; and Whitman, with his greater skill and knowledge of medicine, had stripped her of much of her practice. Therefore she spoke against him and against all white men with fierce vehemence.

Old Waskema was not alone in her denunciations of the white men and in her prophesying of evil to come from their presence. She had a strong ally in Baptiste Dorion, the half-breed interpreter, whose mother was celebrated as a heroine by Washington Irving in "Astoria." Another supporter was Delaware Tom, who dwelt in a cabin in the Blue Mountains with a Nez Percé wife. He was a half-breed Delaware Indian, who had been educated at Dartmouth College, and had then wandered to the wilds of the far West, where he followed the calling of a trapper.

"You, Cayuses and Nez Percés," said Delaware Tom, speaking to members of these tribes at various times, "you will be by and by as are the Indian tribes of the East, as is my tribe, the Delawares. You will be scat-

tered like the ashes of a camp-fire, you will disappear like the camp-fire smoke. The tribes of the East were far greater in numbers than the Nez Percés and Cayuses; but the white man came, and the red men dwindled away before him. Now they are gone. So it will be with you. You shake your heads now, you do not believe; but I have seen, and I know."

Phil Curtis heard of this talk through Timuitti and Elijah. He knew Baptiste Dorion and Delaware Tom, and he knew Waskema; above all, he knew the Indian character, and he was troubled.

As if to give point to these prophecies of evil and emphasize the unguarded statement of Whitman that the noted wagon would be the forerunner of others, it became known that an emigrant party, after making its way over the mountains, was approaching Walla Walla.

News of its approach ran among the Indians like fire in dry grass. Pio-pio-mox-mox heard it from the lips of his son, Elijah. He leaped on his pony and galloped down the hills to Whitman's.

"Is it true?" he demanded. "We hear that many, many white men are coming! We like you, Doct' Whit'n, but we do not want too many white men to come. They will plough up our camas and drive away our game. Delaware Tom tells us so."

Five Crows and his brother Tautau heard it, Tilou-

kaikt heard it, so likewise did Tilskit, the father of Timuitti. They, too, leaped to the backs of their spotted ponies and rode like the wind to the mission.

By the time they arrived there the party which had crossed the mountains was in sight. Phil Curtis, who had been on a trip to Fort Walla Walla for Whitman, jogged in on his pony at the same time. He beheld the dust-stained and wearied group of white men, women, and children, and his heart warmed toward them. But he saw Five Crows and Pio-pio-mox-mox, Tiloukaikt and Tautau talking together, and he felt a sense of uneasiness and alarm.

Whitman and his wife were more than delighted to greet this party from the states. Narcissa laughed and cried at the same time, as she kissed the women and the girls. It was so good, she said, to see white faces! Whitman was so overjoyed that he ran from one to the other of the party, shaking hands again and again.

"And you have letters for us," he said, to the leader of the party. "And you must bring a great deal of news, of which we haven't so much as heard a word! The last direct news we had was months ago, and months old when it reached us. What is Congress doing? Does it realize yet that Oregon is an empire in extent and is worth a thought at least? What about the Oregon boundary?"

Though these questions, if heard by the Indians, would not have been understood by them, they were understood by Phil Curtis. Often he had heard Mr. and Mrs. Whitman discuss the question of the boundary between the possessions of the United States and those of the British government, and he knew from these talks that a serious struggle for the Oregon country was one of the probabilities of the future, if the Washington authorities ever became aroused to the value of the Columbia River region.

Whitman and his wife sat late that night talking with the adult members of Lovejoy's party.

Phil Curtis, seated on a bench before an open fire in the mission room, listened to the chatter of the young people. The firelight illuminated his handsome face, which, though still dark and tanned, showed the refining influence of the years spent by him in the Whitman home and the education he had received. The wonderful suit of ornamented deerskin given him by his Indian mother Neekomy was outgrown and outworn long ago. In its place was a suit of cloth, purchased at Vancouver, and fashioned by the deft needle and clever fingers of Narcissa Whitman.

When the little party, which was as gay as young life and laughter could make it, had broken up for the night, Phil strolled out under the stars. There he met

Timuitti, who was walking thoughtfully up and down the river side.

"I do not see why any one can object to the coming of such people," he said to Timuitti. "The Cayuses and the Nez Percés are wrong in that. How jolly those young people were; and you'd think they would be too tired to talk, they've travelled so far to-day to reach the mission! And that girl, Cora Carlton—did you see what bright eyes she has, and what rosy cheeks?"

"I like the Cayuse girls better," said Timuitti, somewhat displeased, as it seemed to Phil. "And I think the Cayuses and the Nez Percés are right; for if the white men come, a great many of them, what will become of the Indian? He cannot farm; there will be no game for him to shoot; so he will have to die!"

Phil might have given more heed to these words of his Indian foster brother if his thoughts had not been too much distracted by memories of the bright eyes, the rosy cheeks, and the witty sayings of the girl who had arrived that day, and whose name was Cora Carlton.

CHAPTER VIII

AN IMPORTANT MATTER

“**T**HIS is one of the most important questions that the American people were ever called on to settle, and they seem to show not the slightest interest in it!”

Doctor Whitman was talking with Amos Lovejoy and Elijah White. The former was a lawyer and military man; the latter a government Indian agent, who had been the real leader of the party that had arrived at Waiilatpu the day before. The subject had been uppermost in the conversation of the previous evening, and to these men it was the most important theme that could be discussed at that time.

Phil Curtis stood by the mission door with pretty Cora Carlton. She had asked him to show her where the camas grew, and to tell her something about them and about that wonderful Indian potato, the wapato of the marshes; so they set out together, walking by the river.

“I think this is a beautiful country,” she said, as she

looked across the rolling plain to the misty Blue Mountains. "Mr. White told us all about it before we arrived, but until I saw it I did not realize it would be so pretty. I am sure I shall like to live here. I don't wonder that Doctor Whitman is anxious for the United States to become secure in the possession of Oregon."

Her fair face and blue eyes showed interest and animation. As Phil had said to Timuitti, her eyes were bright and her cheeks rosy. Altogether, he was sure, as he now looked at her, that he had never seen a girl so beautiful. He already knew that she was related to Lovejoy; and he had met her father, who was a member of the expedition. He had not spoken to her mother, but he had seen her talking with Mrs. Whitman, and had observed that she was a bright-faced and pleasant-voiced woman.

"I don't suppose this country looks very much like the East?" he said, as they walked on. "Your home was in Pennsylvania, I understand."

"Not at all like it. Pennsylvania is a dear old state, though, and I shall never cease to love it. I really didn't want to come out here, I must confess; but I think I shall be quite satisfied, now that I have seen Oregon."

Phil smiled.

"You are sure to be satisfied, when you have seen all of Oregon. I have never been in the East, but I don't see how it can be superior to Oregon. Looking from here you see only these plains, a few trees by the river, some hills and those mountains; but this doesn't represent Oregon. It's only a little part of it. Oregon has everything, it seems to me. It has a really wonderful river, the Columbia, with cliffs so high in places that it almost makes one dizzy to look up to the top of them, and great waterfalls and rapids. Then there are hundreds and hundreds of miles of the biggest trees there are in the world, I am sure. And mountains! There are some very large mountains out here—as big as any you saw while on the trip. And the game and the fish! I wish you could see the salmon swarming in the Columbia, some time!"

"Are there any fish in this river?"

"Oh, yes, a good many; we catch them now and then."

"All of them?"

She laughed merrily.

"No, not all of them, of course," said Phil, flushing. "We couldn't do that. You must believe what the Indians say."

"What is that?" she asked.

"That we're going to catch all the salmon in the Columbia. That's one of the things Delaware Tom

tells them. He says the white men will catch all the fish, kill all the game, and dig up and ruin all the camas fields; and that then the Indians will have to starve, or go to work like the white men."

She looked thoughtful as they walked on.

"Aren't you afraid you will have trouble with the Indians after a while? The people of the train were talking about that nearly all the way over the mountains. There has always been trouble, they say, where white people and Indians come together."

Her question made Phil thoughtful too.

"I have been trying to think that we never shall have trouble with these Indians. Doctor Whitman has been so good to them, and they like him and Mrs. Whitman so well. They seem glad to listen to his preaching, and a good many of them have joined his church. Pio-pio-mox-mox has joined, and so have Tilskit and Tiloukaikt and other chiefs. And they let their children come here to the mission school. All Indians are not alike. It seems to me that Tilskit and old Neekomy are different; and so are Timuitti, Elijah, and Joseph. Elijah is one of the finest boys I ever knew."

"What queer names they have!" she said. "I shouldn't think you could remember them. Elijah and Joseph, though, are Bible names."

"Yes," he said, and proceeded to tell her how these Indian boys came to have such names.

They walked on and on until they came to the camas fields.

"You heard what Doctor Whitman and Mr. White were talking about?" she said, as he began to point out the dead camas stalks.

"About Oregon and the United States? They were talking about that all last evening."

"And the English!"

"There's one Englishman in this country — though he is really a Scotchman — who is a good friend to Whitman, and that is Doctor McLoughlin, the Hudson Bay factor at Vancouver. He is Whitman's friend, I suppose, because he's a friend to everybody. But the other Englishmen and Scotchmen are acting very queer lately."

He bent over and with his knife began to dig up the camas.

"Since I have been attending Doctor Whitman's school I've been more glad than ever that I'm an American!"

"More glad than ever? Weren't you always glad?"

"Yes, I suppose so." He stood up and looked at her. "But I didn't understand what it means to be an American as I do now, and didn't think so much about

it. Until I came to Whitman's, you know, I lived all my life nearly in the mountains with trappers and Indians. My father was a free trapper, and a true American, I am glad to say; but most of the trappers were under the Hudson Bay Fur Company, which is English; and as far as the Indians were concerned, they didn't care anything at all about this question of nationality. But I am an American, and I love America!"

Phil flushed when she laughed girlishly at this outburst; but he was immediately reassured.

"You can't love America more than I do. And it's because Doctor Whitman loves America so much that he wants Oregon to become a part of it. I don't blame him; I want it to become a part of our country, too. It's too beautiful to go to the English!"

It was Phil's turn to laugh.

"And the English think it's too beautiful to become a part of the United States! So, you see, there's where the trouble comes in. The English claim Oregon because Vancouver explored the coast, and the Americans claim it through the discoveries of Lewis and Clark, and because an American sea captain explored the Columbia and named it for his ship."

"But I don't suppose there will really be a war about it."

Phil dropped down and began to dig again for the camas root.

"I don't know," he said. "I read in a history the other day that a big war was started once over so little a thing as the ownership of a bucket."

Whitman, White, and Lovejoy were still talking about the possibility of trouble between the United States and England over the possession of Oregon when Phil Curtis and Cora Carlton returned to the mission along the winding river.

It was an important question, and it soon became the burning issue in the far Northwest.

CHAPTER IX

A DINNER AND A BOAST

OUT from the gate of Fort Walla Walla rode the daughter of Pierre Pambrun, the Hudson Bay factor. The boatmen from Vancouver had but a few minutes before swung in to the shore below the stockade walls. She had heard them sing their boating song:—

“Malbrouck has gone a-fighting,
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine!”

But she was already seated on her beautiful pony, and she rode through the gate with a wave of her little hand to Monique, the stern and stately Iroquois.

Off in the distance she had seen a horseman advancing on the trail from Waiilatpu. That horseman was Phil Curtis, and she had been expecting that he would bring her a letter from Elijah, who had gone down to Waiilatpu but a few days before. The son of Pio-pio-mox-mox had found favor in her eyes, and she was anxious to hear from him. So, though the boatmen

sang merrily of the great Marlborough, whom they called Malbrouck, she clattered away from the stockade walls in a little cloud of dust.

She was a beautiful girl, this daughter of Pierre Pambrun. Though her Indian blood showed in the dark tint of her complexion, she seemed but a dark brunette. Her black hair floated in silky curls, and her eyes were blue like those of her father.

Phil Curtis regarded her with admiration as she careered toward him on that beautiful pony of a rich cream color with mottlings and markings of darker hue. It was as clean-limbed and wiry as a racer. And Maria Pambrun, as she galloped up the trail, reminded Phil of that other half-breed Indian girl, famous on the Pacific slope as the Canadian Lily, who rode in the chase with her father like Diana, the huntress, with flying hair and flaming cheeks.

With a clatter of the pony's hoofs the factor's daughter drew rein, as she encountered Phil Curtis. He lifted his cap in greeting.

"You're slow in coming!" she pouted. "I think, maybe, you have a letter for me, and I have been waiting for it!"

"Yes," said Phil, and he produced it.

She broke the seal and read the letter.

"It's always the same old thing," she said, pucker-

ing her smooth forehead. "Even he has gone to talking and writing about it!"

Phil laughed.

"If you will enlighten me, I may know what you're speaking about."

"Well, why should he fill his letter up with that? I get tired of this eternal Oregon question! Isn't there something else to write about?"

They were riding on toward the fort, side by side.

"It seems to be a subject of a good deal of interest," said Phil. "So I suppose Elijah thought you would be interested in it, too."

"Now, you're laughing at me," she declared, and folding the letter she placed it in her pocket. "You may tell me the news at Waiilatpu; this letter doesn't."

"The Oregon question!" said Phil, smiling at her. "There doesn't seem to be anything else worth talking about just now."

"Doesn't it weary you? It does me. It's just the same here at Walla Walla. And, as if all this talk wasn't enough, the factors and agents have a meeting here to-day to talk about it still more."

"I knew it," Phil admitted; "that's why I am here."

"You knew it?"

"Elijah told me. Doctor Whitman is here, too, isn't he?"

"He came up to see a sick man yesterday—old Maxani, who lives in the hut below the fort, and is down with fever."

She looked at him intently.

"Did he come here just to see what was to be done at this meeting to-day, and not because he wanted to doctor Maxani?"

"No; he came to see Maxani. Doctor Whitman isn't a man who would do anything like that. Whatever he does, he does openly."

"But you came to see and to hear?" Her blue eyes flashed.

"Yes; and to bring you that letter."

"I thank you for the letter. But hasn't there been enough said about this Oregon question?"

"I don't expect to say anything about it."

"Perhaps not, but you favor the Americans."

"How can I help that? I am an American!"

Phil made the boast proudly.

The blue eyes of the girl flashed again.

"But the Hudson Bay men were here before the Americans! This is Hudson Bay territory. The Americans have no right here. The Indians do not want them; they were satisfied before the Americans

came. They trapped in the mountains and sold their furs to the factors. Everything was going along peaceably until the Americans came."

"I thought you weren't interested in the Oregon question," Phil remarked dryly.

"I'm not; I'm tired of it. But I can see that if the Americans had not come, there would be no trouble."

"Do you think there will be trouble?" he asked quietly.

"It can't be helped, if the Americans keep on coming. Do you think the Hudson Bay men want to lose all this fur country? The Company holds its charter from England. What would that charter be worth if the United States controlled the country? It wouldn't be worth anything, Phil Curtis, and you know it. And if the missionaries can have their way, there will be no more trapping."

"We won't quarrel," he said, smiling at her. "It seems that this matter tends to make the best of friends enemies. We're friends; let us stay friends."

"But my father is the factor here. His business is threatened. If you Americans have your way, Fort Walla Walla will have to close its doors. I shouldn't like that, you know; it's been my home always."

Maria Pambrun was becoming excited.

Phil deftly turned the subject:—

“Will Doctor McLoughlin be here at this meeting of the factors and agents? He is a man that I love, and I should like to see him.”

Pierre Pambrun's daughter thought quite as highly of McLoughlin, and this praise cooled her rising anger.

“No, he will not be here. I should like to see him myself; there is no one I should like to see better.”

“Except Elijah,” said Phil.

Whereupon her dark cheeks flushed.

Together they rode up to the stockade gate and entered the enclosure.

Whitman was there, in the midst of a group of men, most of whom had come up the river in the boats.

Pierre Pambrun, red-faced, light-haired, round and jolly, was doing his best to make the gathering pleasant for these guests. In the cook rooms, aided by servants, Madame Pambrun was superintending matters.

“Ay, that's good!” said Pambrun, elevating his little red nose and sniffing toward the cook rooms. “We shall have a dinner to-day fit for a king—or a Hudson Bay factor!”

Doctor Whitman and Phil Curtis sat down together to that dinner. At the head of the table Pierre Pambrun did the honors as host. He could carve a venison roast like a French chef, and his conversation was of itself a feast.

Before the dinner ended a horseman clattered up to the door. A minute later a Hudson Bay man who had gone out to speak to the horseman rushed into the dining room, his face flushed with excitement and exultation.

"Hurrah for British Oregon!" he cried. "An express messenger has just arrived from Fort Colville with great news. One hundred and fifty Englishmen and Canadians are on their way down the Columbia, and they are coming to settle in Oregon as a British colony. Hurrah for Oregon! America is too late—we have got the country!"

A roar of applause broke out.

Marcus Whitman said nothing. He was too shrewd to show how the announcement affected him. But no sooner was the dinner at an end than he spoke to Phil.

"Get your pony," he commanded; "we ride at once for Waiilatpu. America is not too late, even though they think so. America is never too late, when she sets her hand to anything!"

CHAPTER X

WHITMAN'S RIDE TO SAVE OREGON

THERE was tearful excitement at Waiilatpu. Marcus Whitman had determined to try to save Oregon to the United States by a journey across the continent to Washington.

Winter was at hand, and what a winter trip over the great Rockies meant Phil Curtis knew only too well by reason of his experience as a trapper. Yet he did not try to dissuade Whitman. He had the utmost faith in the man, and was himself deeply concerned for the fate of the beautiful Oregon country. The announcement at Walla Walla that a colony of Englishmen and Canadians had entered Oregon by way of the Columbia had stirred his blood like a blast from a war bugle.

Nor did Mrs. Whitman try to dissuade her husband, though the thought of the long separation and of the hardships and perils of that terrible winter journey filled her eyes with tears and choked her

utterance, even while she tried to exhibit the courage of which heroines as well as heroes are made.

The tears and the lamentations came from the new pioneers who had come over the mountains with White and Lovejoy, from brother missionaries, and from the Indian children of the mission school. These begged Whitman to stay, to reconsider his determination.

"Let Oregon go!" said some of the immigrants. "America has shown no interest in it. Congress thinks more of some little cod-fishing banks on the Eastern coast than of this whole beautiful country. Only the English seem to appreciate it. Let it go to the English; the British government isn't such a bad government but that we can live under its rule. It will be a foolish attempt, and it will be made at the risk of your life; and your life, Doctor Whitman, is too valuable to be risked in any such way. Think of your wife; she is trying to be brave, but any one can see that she is crying her heart out. She is afraid that she will never see you again. And we are afraid. Think of the mission school and your work here!"

Lovejoy, however, approved of Whitman's decision.

"I will go with you," he said. "We will make the journey together. Oregon must be saved to our great nation. No matter if the Eastern people and Congress are willing to throw this beautiful land away as Esau

threw away his birthright; it is only because they do not understand what a country it is. They can be roused in time to act. Washington can be reached before Congress adjourns."

"If I do not go," said Whitman, "the English will pour settlers in here from Canada. The movement has already begun. Whichever nation settles the country and organizes a government will hold Oregon. I know that I can so stir the Eastern people that a big immigration will set in here next summer. I will bring in a big emigrant train myself. I must go!"

The feeling of patriotism which stirred Paul Revere when he rode through the night from Boston town to Concord, and that thrilled Sheridan when he galloped wildly to Winchester to rally a disorganized army, was leaping like a sacred fire in the heart of Marcus Whitman. With Whitman it was a feeling of patriotism and religion combined. In every age, when so moved, men have marched to death as they would go to a banquet.

Out from the little mission of Waiilatpu rode Marcus Whitman and Amos Lovejoy. For some distance they were accompanied by a tearful group. Then they rode on, alone, save for the Indians who were to go with them a portion of the way.

Phil Curtis stood with Mrs. Whitman, Cora Carlton, and others, in the trail that led to the mountains from Waiilatpu, and his eyes followed the brave men as they started on that trip across the continent.

Long after they had vanished beyond the reach of vision Phil saw them, with his mind's eye, riding on; and as he knew the route over the terrible mountains so well, he was able to follow them from point to point in their perilous and wearisome journey.

The Indian guide rode ahead. Whitman and Lovejoy, following, talked of the conditions in Washington, and of the contents of a letter from the American Board of Missions which Lovejoy himself had carried overland to Waiilatpu, and which stated that the mission was too expensive to be continued. That letter had been like a knife stab to the heart of the faithful missionary. But he had said of it, as he had said of the lack of interest in Oregon on the part of the Eastern people and Congress, "It is because they do not know!"

The two men hastened so rapidly that in eleven days they were at Fort Hall. Here Captain Grant, the Hudson Bay factor, tried to discourage them, as, six years before, he had tried to induce Whitman to abandon the famous wagon he was taking to the Oregon country. His purpose was the same now as then.

He knew that the Hudson Bay Fur Company did not want Americans to enter the Oregon country.

"Doctor Whitman," he said, as he made this last effort, "I must inform you that the snow is already twenty feet deep in the Rocky Mountains, and besides the dangers from the Blackfeet, the Sioux and the Pawnees are engaged in a war, and it will be as much as your life is worth if you try to go."

"I must go on!" said Whitman. "If the snow were a hundred feet deep in the mountain passes, and all the tribes of the border were set to keep me from going, I would go on!"

He went on.

From Fort Hall to Uintah, Whitman and Lovejoy met with terrible weather. At Fort Uncompahgra they took a new guide and turned southward to escape the deep snows.

"The route is not passable," they were told. "You cannot cross Grand River."

"It must be passed, even if it is impassable, when Oregon is to be saved!" said Whitman.

The guide drew back at the crossing of the Grand. Before them stretched the dark river. For two hundred feet from each shore solid ice extended, and between these masses flowed a lane of water two hundred feet wide in which ice chunks tossed.

"We cannot cross!" said the guide.

"We must cross!" said Whitman.

Dismounting from his mule he cut a long willow pole. Then he mounted to the saddle with the pole on his shoulder, and rode to the stream and out upon the ice as far as it would bear him and his mule. When the ice began to crack and crumble beneath the hoofs of the mule, Whitman ordered Lovejoy and the Indian guide, who were behind him, to push on the end of the pole that stuck out over his shoulder toward them.

"Push!" he cried, as the mule held back and refused to enter the ice-cold water. "Push!" he shouted.

They pushed with all their might. The mule slipped on the ice. The next moment it dropped into the wild water, and went under out of sight, taking Whitman with it. But when it came up, with Whitman still in the saddle, it began to swim for the other shore. With the pole Whitman pushed aside the ice chunks that floated against it and hindered its progress. When the ice on the opposite side was reached, he leaped out, broke a path with the pole and with his boots, and assisted the mule to make a landing. Lovejoy and the guide followed, and the "impassable" Grand River had been crossed.

By the time Lovejoy and the guide had landed, Whitman had a roaring fire on the bank by which to warm themselves and to dry their clothing.

The route chosen now lay in the direction of Taos, in what is at present New Mexico. It was hoped that by veering toward the south the worst storms would be escaped. But on a high slope in the heart of the mountains they encountered a blizzard so severe that they had to seek shelter in a dark defile to save their lives and the lives of their animals.

After remaining there ten days they tried to go on again, when they were caught in another storm so pitiless and blinding that the guide lost his way. When he admitted that he was lost, the mules were permitted to pick a path; and they led the travellers back to the old camp in the defile.

Here the guide declared he would go no farther. To go on was death, he said, and he was not yet ready to die.

"There is but one thing to do," said Whitman to Lovejoy. "We must get another guide. To do that I will go back to Fort Uncompahgra."

To Fort Uncompahgra Whitman returned with the obdurate guide, encountering terrible storms, while Lovejoy remained in camp in the defile trying to recuperate the wasted strength of the mules by feed-

ing them boughs and the inner bark scraped from willows, the only food he could procure for them.

In ten days Whitman returned with a new guide; and as the storm which had raged almost continuously had abated, they pressed on again. When they ran out of provisions they killed and ate the dog that had accompanied them thus far. Next they killed one of the mules for food. That winter of 1842-1843 was noted in the mountains for its severity. But ever Whitman pressed on. He was a Courier of Empire, and he knew it. He had a message for the people of the East and for Congress, a message of such supreme importance that its delivery could not be delayed. The fate of Oregon was hanging in the balance. He must go on!

Neither at Taos nor at Santa Fé, which they reached next, could any news be had from Congress or from the states. At these places they remained only long enough to recruit their supplies. Then they set out for old Fort Bent, on the head waters of the Arkansas River, which they reached after incredible hardships.

Four days before reaching the fort they encountered George Bent, a brother of General Bent himself.

"What about the Oregon question?" was almost

the first thing Whitman asked him. "Is it still pending, and can I reach Washington before Congress adjourns?"

To his joy he learned that the Oregon matter was still unsettled, and that a party of trappers was ready to leave Bent's Fort on its way down the Santa Fé trail to Independence and St. Louis.

When Whitman arrived at Bent's the trappers had gone; but a runner left the fort at once to overtake and stop them.

Lovejoy remained at Bent's Fort. Whitman hurried on down the Arkansas alone, overtaking the trapper band, which had been halted by the runner and had gone into camp to await his coming.

Lovejoy followed as far as St. Louis, with another caravan; and there began to agitate the emigration movement to Oregon in which he and Whitman were so much interested.

Marcus Whitman hastened on across the continent to Washington, a Courier of Empire as great as any seen on the Map of Time.

The pioneer presented a singularly unique appearance when he arrived in Washington, after that memorable and historic journey, to beg of American statesmen not to throw away the magnificent domain of Oregon. Doctor Barrows, in his "Oregon . . . the

Struggle for Possession," describes his appearance when he returned to St. Louis :—

"He wore coarse fur garments with buckskin breeches. He had a buffalo overcoat, with a hood for emergencies, with fur leggings and boot moccasins. His entire dress when on the street did not show one inch of woven fabric.

"He was a man not to be forgotten. He was of medium height, more compact than spare, with a stout shoulder, and large head not much above it, covered with stiff iron-gray hair ; while his face carried all the mustache and whiskers that four months had been able to put on. He carried himself awkwardly, though perhaps courteously enough, for trappers, Indians, mules, and grizzlies had been his principal company for six years."

Such was the strange figure, such the man, who came to Washington, to stand before the President and the leading statesmen, and to entreat them, that the rich country of Oregon might be saved to the United States.

Before that fur-clad figure turned away from Washington, so great a change was effected in the sentiment of the East, that the President had sent this message to the American minister in England :—

"The United States will consent to give nothing below the latitude of forty-nine degrees!"

CHAPTER XI

MUTTERINGS OF THE STORM

MARCUS WHITMAN returned to Oregon with a thousand American settlers, who had with them more than a hundred wagons drawn by oxen and fifteen hundred loose horses and cattle. He had filled the East with new ideas of Oregon, and this was the first wave of the great emigration that was soon to set in.

There had been much trouble with the Indians during his absence. Careless Cayuses, fishing in the river by the mill, had set the mill on fire, and it had been burned to the ground. The conduct of some of the Indians so frightened Mrs. Whitman that she left Waiilatpu and took refuge in the Methodist mission on the Columbia, whither she was accompanied by Phil Curtis.

Spalding, whose mission was situated at Lapwai, among the Nez Percés, a hundred miles northeast of Waiilatpu, had also experienced trouble with the Indians. It was at Lapwai that Joseph attended school, and Five Crows, Joseph's half-brother, drove his herds

over there each winter that he also might go to school to Spalding.

On the plains at Lapwai a great Indian council had been held, attended by the head men and principal chiefs of all the Oregon tribes. Phil Curtis, Tom McKay, and a number of other white people had gone to the council, where it had seemed for a time that war would be declared by the Indians against the whites.

The talks held there were still being discussed by the Indians when it became known that Whitman was returning with many hundred white men.

Tilskit's band of Cayuses was in the mountains and had seen the monster caravan. Phil was at Lapwai, and the news was brought to him by Timuitti who had ridden hard and long that he might be the first to arrive with the information. He was so much excited he could hardly tell his story.

"Timuitti," said Phil, soberly, "there has been much foolish talk. You are my brother, and as a brother I tell you that those Bostons are good people. They will help the Indians all they can, instead of harming them, and will be to them the best friends they ever had. Remember this, as my brother."

Then Phil mounted his beautiful spotted pony and galloped away across the bunch grass to meet Whitman and the wagon train.

As Whitman drew near to Waiilatpu the Cayuses clustered round him, protesting that they had not intended to burn his mill—that it was an accident.

“It is all right,” he said, in his kindly way, smiling on the members of the protesting delegation and shaking each by the hand. “We will build another mill. We will start up the school at once, and the meetings will begin again. These people want to be your friends; we want all Indians and white men to be friends together here in Oregon.”

Mrs. Whitman returned with joy to her husband at Waiilatpu, and the abandoned work was taken up. Phil became an instructor in the school, though he did not drop his own studies. Cora Carlton became an assistant teacher to Mrs. Whitman.

The new settlers were delighted with the beautiful country. Some stopped in the valley of the Willamette, but the greater number went on to the Columbia and began the settlements that were so soon to grow into towns and cities. For a time all went well; but Delaware Tom, Baptiste Dorion, and Waskema did not cease in their efforts to create dissatisfaction among the Indians of Oregon. Waskema mixed strange decoctions and muttered weird incantations and terrifying prophecies.

“I see the Indians falling like the leaves,” she said;

"I see them melting away like the mountain snows when the Chinook blows warm from the sea. Oh, my people, my people; you have let the white man come, and now you must go!"

Dorion rode among the Nez Percés at Lapwai. He looked at their houses, built in imitation of those of white men, and at their growing crops. His thin lips curled in a sneer.

"You are fools!" he said. "Do you not know that this little army which Doctor Whitman has brought in here is but the advance of a greater army that is coming? When it comes it will slay you and take all that you have,—your houses, your crops, your ponies. These missions and these mission schools are but the traps which the white men set to snare silly Indians."

Soon the words of Dorion were burning on every Nez Percé lip.

Delaware Tom came down to Wailatpu from his cabin in the Blue Mountains. He saw the Cayuses helping Whitman to rebuild his mill, and beheld the Indian children in the school.

"You are already slaves," he said; "but Whitman has thrown dust in your eyes and you do not yet see it. He has coaxed you to the work which white men want done. He is making squaws of you. And he will make squaw slaves of all your children."

Tiloukaikt began to join in now and then with these malcontents.

"I do not like Doct' Whit'n any more," he declared. "I joined his church, I know, but I do not like him any more; for he tells me that I cannot have four wives. He says I must give up three of them. I do not like such talk, and I do not like Doct' Whit'n any more."

Phil Curtis heard these things as he went among the Indians. He talked with Timuitti and Joseph about them, and with Tilskit and Neekomy. He learned also that another half-breed, Joe Lewis, whom Whitman had aided and befriended, was doing much bad work among the Indians.

"We are your friends," said Tilskit to Phil; "but the heart of the Indian is becoming very black."

Tom McKay and Phil's father came in from the mountains where they had been trapping, bringing startling stories of the discontent that was spreading everywhere among the Oregon Indians.

Whitman went with these men, and with Phil Curtis, to Tilskit and Pio-pio-mox-mox, both of whom were known to be kindly disposed toward the whites, and induced them to head a call for another council.

From the mountains, from the Columbia, from the sea, came the Indian chiefs and leading men, in all the toggery of holiday dress, paint, and feathers, in answer

to that call. More than a score of head chiefs of the Indians of Oregon responded.

Waskema, Dorion, and Delaware Tom came also, to stir up further dissatisfaction and anger. They mingled with the Indians gathered for the council and talked incessantly. Deceitful Joe Lewis kept away and professed friendship for Whitman.

"The words of the white men are a medicine which will put you to sleep; it will close your eyes and ears so that you cannot see and cannot hear the ruin that is coming to the Indians of Oregon," said Baptiste Dorion. "Listen not to the words of the white men."

"Dorion lies!" asserted Phil.

"His heart is black!" added Phil's father.

"He is a snake!" declared Tom McKay.

So they said likewise of Delaware Tom and Waskema.

Phil talked with Tilskit, with Timuitti and Elijah, with Joseph and Five Crows. Phil's father used his influence with Pio-pio-mox-mox, with Tiloukaikt and Tautau. Tom McKay went everywhere among the Indians and into their lodges.

The Indians continued to gather at Waiilatpu, until their ponies covered the hillsides and their lodges filled the valley. From the savage standpoint it was a brilliant array. They made a holiday festival of the occa-

sion, indulged in races on foot and on horseback, and in Indian games. So splendid was that barbaric gathering at Wailatpu that it has been likened to the Field of the Cloth of Gold, where, in 1520, Henry VIII of England and Francis I of France tried to outdazzle each other by the splendor of their dress, their courts and armies, and the brilliancy of their combats and tournaments.

To witness those games, races, parades, and shooting matches, white people came from far and near. In the races, the Indian games, and the shooting matches, with rifles and with bows and arrows, Phil Curtis distinguished himself. With perhaps the exception of Tom McKay, there was not a better rifleman on the border, and in a foot-race he could outrun any of the Indian boys. He was perfectly at home, too, in the Indian games, for he had played them from childhood. Mrs. Whitman and Cora Carlton, looking on in the midst of the assembled white people, smiled upon him and fluttered their handkerchiefs in encouragement.

In only one contest was Phil Curtis beaten. That was in a shooting match with bows and arrows, when Matpah, a young and ambitious Cayuse, who was pitted against him, carried off the honors. It was a victory given purposely by Phil to Matpah, in the hope that it

would enable him to gain the good-will of this young Indian and use it as an influence in favor of the white men's cause. Matpah had recently been showing an unfriendly spirit, and had been heard to speak scornfully of the Waiilatpu mission school.

In the great council, held in the open and attended by all the Indians, Marcus Whitman recounted the story of the four Cayuse chiefs who had gone to St. Louis in search of some one who could tell them about the White Man's Book, and of how he had answered that call and was now at Waiilatpu. He protested that his heart was filled with nothing but love and kindness for them, and assured them of the peaceable intentions of all the white men who had come into Oregon.

Many other speakers made like protestations. Tom McKay and Phil's father addressed the Nez Percés and Cayuses in their own languages.

As for Phil Curtis, he ventured upon the greatest speech he had ever attempted, in which he told of his adoption into the Cayuse band of Tilskit, and why he had been so favored by that well-known chief. He was now a Cayuse himself, he said — the white brother of Timuitti, whom all knew, and the white son of Tilskit and Neekomy. He would not lie to his brothers of the Cayuse tribe, nor to his friends, the Nez Percés.

But Baptiste Dorion and Delaware Tom stood up boldly before the white men and denounced Whitman and the American settlers, while old Waskema muttered discontent in the lodges with the Indian women.

The education which Delaware Tom had received at Dartmouth seemed but to add to his craftiness and give keenness and edge to his stinging words. He waxed almost eloquent as he pictured the wrongs which had been perpetrated against various Indian tribes in the East, and particularly against his own tribe, the Delawares; and with stirring and burning words he warned the Cayuses and Nez Percés against the white men.

Baptiste Dorion spoke with such vehemence that his partisans with difficulty restrained themselves from giving vent to their feelings in wild Indian yells. He was garbed as a Canadian voyageur. He was not a bad-looking half-breed; but when he voiced his impassioned thoughts, his black eyes glittered and his sharp face seemed to grow sharper and thinner. He tossed his long hair like a black mane, and his bosom heaved convulsively as he stopped from time to time to note the effect of his words.

“The Bostons have already defeated the Hudson Bay Fur Company and will soon drive them out of the country. The Hudson Bay men treated you well; you

lived as your fathers lived before you, and the factors bought your furs and gave you guns and blankets and the things you need. The Hudson Bay men did not drive the game out of the mountains; they wanted the game and the fur animals to remain, so that you might continue to be trappers and hunters, as your fathers were before you. The Bostons are killing your game and they are trapping your beavers. They already have the country; for the English must now go, since Whitman brought in his army of Bostons. The next to go, after your friends the English leave, will be you —” he thrust out his quivering hands and pointed his lean brown fingers at the Indians — “you, Cayuses; you, Nez Percés! The English are going, and you will go! They will sail in their big canoes back to their old homes beyond the sea; but you — you, Cayuses and Nez Percés — where will you go but into the ground? Utter destruction and the grave will be your portion.”

But for the calmer words of Pio-pio-mox-mox, Tilskit, and some other chiefs who thought well of Marcus Whitman, the great Indian council would have been swept off its feet by the burning denunciations of Baptiste Dorion and Delaware Tom.

“We will not fight now,” said the assembled chiefs at last, clapping their hands. “We are willing to believe that the Bostons are our friends. But because Dorion

and Delaware Tom say they are not, we will send a messenger to the White-headed Eagle at Vancouver and inquire into this thing."

"The danger is over for a time," said Tom McKay to Phil, as the council closed; "but it's over for only a time, I'm afraid."

CHAPTER XII

MATPAH GETS A DUCKING

THOUGH Phil Curtis had permitted Matpah to defeat him in the shooting match with bows and arrows, he failed to gain the good-will of that lusty young Cayuse, in whose heart dark designs and strong ambitions had begun to stir. Day after day, long after the adjournment of the Indian council, Matpah hung about the Waiilatpu mission. He had heretofore scorned the school which Whitman was conducting for the instruction of the young Cayuses; but now, though he would not enter any of the classes for the purpose of study, he was much of the time in the schoolroom, and when he could do so he attended the recitations conducted by Cora Carlton, who feared him because of the strange glances he occasionally bent on her.

At the first opportunity Phil spoke to Timuitti of the matter that was now uppermost in his thoughts.

“Why is Matpah here all the time, when he thinks himself too old and too wise to be a pupil in the school?” he asked.

Timuitti regarded his questioner with a queer smile.

"You not know?"

"I'm not good at guessing, so I don't care to guess."

"Matpah say he going to make that girl his wife."

Phil's face flushed.

"He has been saying that?"

"Many time I hear him say that. That why he come here all time. He say he going to be big chief by and by, and she his wife."

Phil could not discuss the matter with Timuitti, for it would have been impossible to convey to the Indian youth his viewpoint without at the same time saying things which would have given offence. It seemed likely that to the mind of Timuitti, Matpah was not undesirable as a husband for Cora Carlton, or any other girl, white or red. Matpah was already influential in his tribe, and would no doubt become a leading chief in time, for he was both capable and intelligent, in the Indian way. The Canadian voyageurs, many of the trappers, and even some of the Hudson Bay factors and agents, including the great McLoughlin himself, were married to Indian women. Why, then, an Indian might be expected to ask, should it be thought wrong for Matpah to aspire to the hand of a white girl?

"So that is the reason he is here all the time!" was

Phil's thought. "He can't understand how unusual his idea is, and trouble may come of it."

The continued presence of the ambitious young Cayuse irritated him. Nevertheless, he held his peace, until one day when an act of Matpah threw him into a great and ungovernable rage.

That day Phil had gone up the river some distance to inspect the ripening crops which Whitman had cultivated in the valley. As he strolled slowly by the river side on his return, he was not thinking of Matpah. He was watching the red clouds in the west where the sun was sinking, and glancing now and then at the Indian lodges by the river. In front of the mission a number of Indians had gathered, some on foot and others on horseback. Whitman was standing by the door talking with them.

As Phil followed the path, which dipped toward the river through the high grass, the Indians by the mission door, and even the lodges near at hand, were for a time shut from his sight. Yet the high clouds, shining like mingled gold and copper, held his attention. Suddenly he heard a cry of fright in a girlish voice.

"Cora!" was his instant thought.

He broke into a quick run, and as he came out upon the higher ground he saw Cora Carlton just before him struggling in the grasp of Matpah.

The young Cayuse had been very pertinacious that day in his attentions to the girl. In the schoolroom he had sat staring at her until her cheeks reddened with irritation and nervousness, and outside of the schoolroom he had hung about as if desirous of speaking to her.

She had avoided him, she thought, for he was not to be seen when she set out along the river path, her intention being to meet Phil and walk home with him, as his return was expected about that time.

As she walked on she had almost ceased to think of Matpah, so was very much surprised and startled when he arose from the grass at the side of the path and stepped toward her, his glance fixed on her in the peculiar manner she had before observed. She halted in indecision and turned half about, whereupon the dark eyes showed a flash of anger.

"I wait here to see you!" he said, in a tone of command. "I want to spik to you this long time."

He came close up to her and put his hand on her shoulder, looking down into her face.

"I will spik to you; and I will tell you that my wife you will be some day!"

His grasp tightened painfully on her shoulder.

"Let me go, please!" she begged.

"No, I will spik with you!" he declared fiercely.

"I see you come and I wait here, and now I will speak with you!"

She tried to draw back. His look and his words, more than the pain, frightened her; and when his grip on her shoulder tightened still more, she cried out in alarm.

It was that cry which brought Phil Curtis along the path and over the rise in wild haste.

Matpah released the girl and stepped back when he beheld Phil, and she started instantly in a run toward the mission. Phil was shaking with rage as he approached the stalwart young Indian. Matpah was older, taller, and apparently much stronger than he. Naturally not a bad-looking Indian, his dark face was disfigured now by an angry scowl.

"Why do you come?" he demanded, speaking in Cayuse.

"It seems that I was needed," said Phil, still trembling. "What were you doing? Answer me that! You are a coward to frighten a girl in that way."

Matpah answered with an unexpected blow, driven straight at Phil's face. Phil dodged it and leaped at him like a tiger. The next instant he and the Cayuse were rolling together on the ground, while Whitman and the Indians in front of the mission, and some of the Indians who had been loitering round the near-by lodges, hurried toward the scene.

It was not often that Phil Curtis lost his head, but he lost it now. Overpowered by indignation and wrath, he caught Matpah by the throat. The young Cayuse, possessed of great strength, rose on his knees, and then gained his feet. Together in the tall grass the combatants swayed to and fro. The Indian drove Phil backward, and for a little while it seemed that he would push him into the river, which was just at hand; but as Phil retreated, he shifted his position suddenly, stooped down, and with a quick movement and a lightning-like swing he lifted Matpah from his feet and hurled him into the stream.

As soon as it was over Phil stood dazed, panting and trembling. Matpah struck the water with a loud splash and sank from sight instantly. But he came up in a little while, and though plainly bewildered began to swim toward the shore. Whitman was on the bank and helped him out of the water as he made his landing.

Phil stood in the grass by the path. His heart jumped and his nerves were all a-quiver. The Indians who had arrived were talking loudly, but he did not notice what they said.

Matpah stopped as he came through the grass from the margin of the stream. His clothing was dripping, and his long hair was a wet wisp. He

looked at Phil long and steadily, his black eyes gleaming with ferocity and hate.

"Boston," he said, speaking in English, that Whitman might not fail to understand, "I am Matpah, and a Walla Walla Cayuse, and we will meet again!"

The gathering Indians closed about him, and Phil heard him explaining to them what had occurred, interpreting it in a way to suit himself. Phil did not care to be drawn into a discussion which would be unprofitable. He knew that in his present temper he might say things that were better left unsaid, so he turned and walked slowly along the path. As he thus walked on, Whitman overtook him.

"I was too hasty," Phil admitted, as he told of what had occurred; "but when I heard Cora scream and ran to her assistance, he struck at me."

"It's unfortunate — the whole thing is very unfortunate, but I don't think I can blame you," said Whitman, somewhat to Phil's surprise, for Marcus Whitman was always set against fighting of any kind, or for any purpose. "I had just a word with her, as she ran down the path. He had been hiding in the grass, and he frightened her terribly."

"He is a scoundrel!" said Phil, giving open expression to his indignation.

Whitman glanced back at the Indians, who were still gathered about Matpah.

"If he were a white man I should call him an unmitigated scoundrel. He probably doesn't understand that he has done anything wrong; likely he feels that he is the one who has been wronged. I've seen for some time that he has been attracted to Miss Carlton. Being a savage, he has acted like a savage. I don't doubt that he wants to make her his wife."

"Yes; Timuitti told me that he did."

Whitman again glanced back at the Indians, and saw that they were moving toward one of the lodges, with Matpah still in their midst.

"It will be policy for me to have a talk with them," he said thoughtfully. "I don't want Matpah to win them over to his side, and he will do it if he can."

He turned back along the path, while Phil went on to the mission, where he found Cora Carlton and Mrs. Whitman, both in a state of great indignation. They were also filled with a good deal of uneasiness.

"I can't blame you, Phil," said Narcissa. "Yet I am afraid trouble will come of it. I've been watching that young Cayuse for some time, and I'm sure he is a vindictive Indian."

"I'm sorry that it happened," Phil confessed; "I ought to have held in my temper. I know I lost con-

trol of myself completely. Matpah will join with those other plotters now and do all he can against the white people. But it couldn't be helped; at any rate, it can't be helped now."

When Whitman returned to the mission, he reported that he thought no trouble would arise out of the incident, as Matpah appeared to be in a more cheerful frame of mind.

"He is only crafty," said Phil. "He is not a fellow to tell you what he thinks or what he intends to do. Timuitti and Elijah will be the ones to find that out for me."

"The thing that pleases me is that he won't come back now to the school," was Cora Carlton's declaration. "I've seen how he has been watching me, and I've grown more and more afraid of him every day."

Phil talked with Timuitti and Elijah, and asked them to report to him whatever of a threatening character Matpah might say among the Indians. They promised; but they heard nothing, or at least reported nothing.

Matpah kept away from the school and away from Wailatpu; and if he had any plans of revenge, they seemed to have been dropped.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WOLF MEETING

PHIL CURTIS had gone out to his wolf trap, which he had set on the border of the tall rye grass, a mile or more beyond the mission.

The wolves had come down from the Blue Mountains of Oregon and had wrought great devastation in the flocks. Scarcely a family of immigrants but had suffered losses. A young pony, Cora Carlton's favorite, had been pulled down by a band of the savage brutes not more than a week before, and Phil himself had lost a colt which had been slain within a dozen rods of the mission house.

Many explanations of the exceeding boldness of the mountain wolves were given. One was that they found it much easier to pull down and slay a calf or a colt than to run down a deer or some other fleet-footed creature of the mountains. The result of their raids was a bitter and deadly war waged against them throughout the valley of the Walla Walla and the whole of the Oregon country.

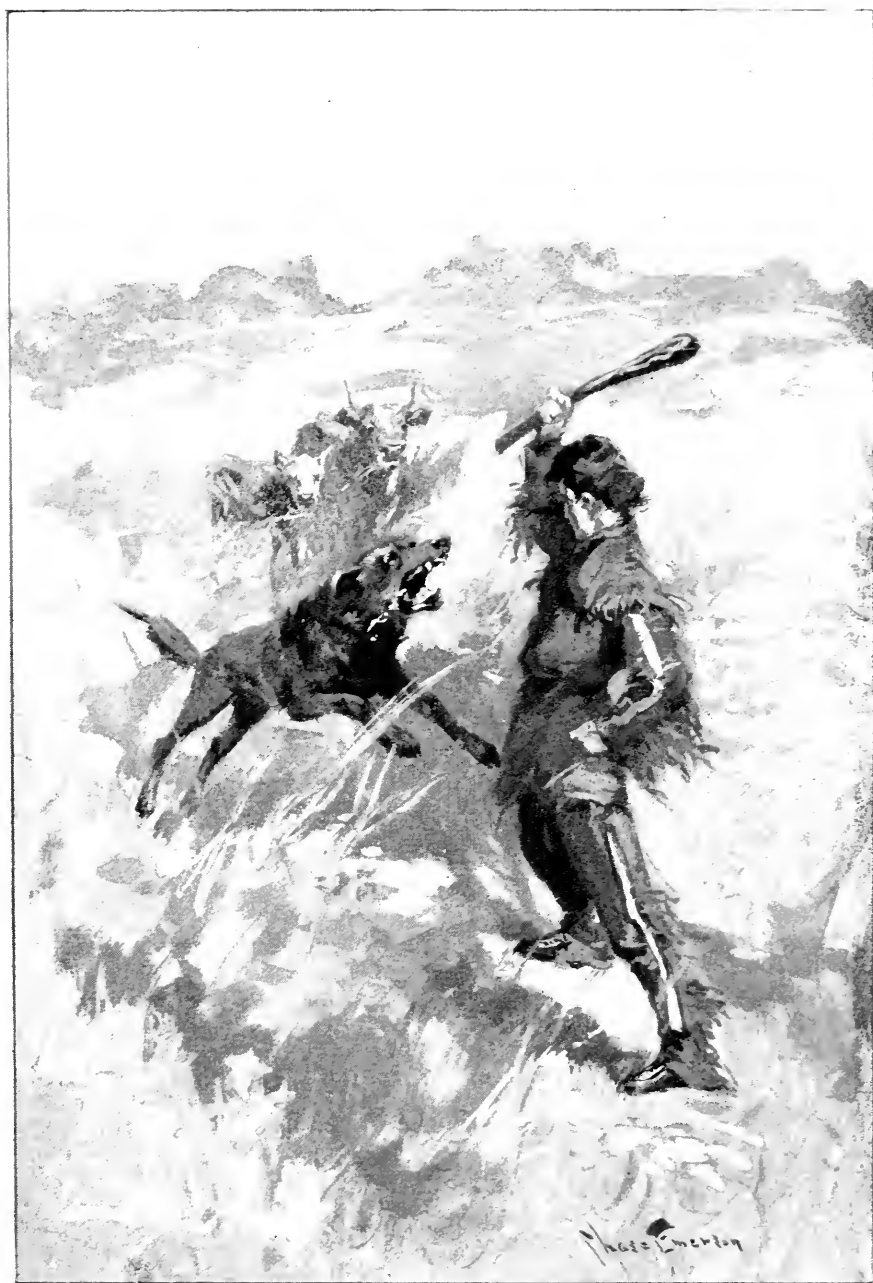
Phil's wolf trap was a dead fall — a clumsy structure of poles and small cottonwood logs supported by a figure 4 trigger. He had set it directly in the game trail that came from the hills to the river, for up and down that trail he had more than once seen wolves passing.

When he arrived in the vicinity of the trap, he saw that it was unsprung, as he had left it; yet out beyond it, in the grass, he caught sight of something that was sufficient to quicken his pulse.

In that spot a cow had cleverly hidden her young calf; for the habit which wild animals have of concealing their young extends in many instances to domestic animals as well; and cattle that are reared on the plains or in the mountains in a semi-wild state, exhibit this peculiarity in a marked degree. This cow had placed her calf in the tall grass close by the trail, where it had been found by a wolf.

When Phil caught sight of them, the hungry brute had been driven back for the moment, and the cow stood with lowered horns and blazing eyes, her whole being surcharged with ferocity.

Though the wolf had retreated before the onslaught, it had not given up its purpose. Alternately crouching and leaping to and fro, it watched for an opportunity to spring upon the calf, while the mother, equally alert,



"HE DASHED COURAGEOUSLY UPON THE BRUTE."

opposed every threatening movement with lowered head.

Phil did not await the result of the contest. He gave a shout and ran forward as rapidly as he could. Unfortunately, he had no rifle with him; but as he ran he stooped to pick up a club, which chanced to be lying by the path, and swinging this and again shouting he rushed on.

The wolf continued to leap to and fro in front of the lowered horns of the cow. Then, as it suddenly attempted to get by her, with a low bellow of rage she dashed at it, and but for its exceeding agility would have pinned it to the ground. This apparently was the opening the wolf had long sought, for it finally succeeded in passing the cow as she attempted to turn.

Again Phil shouted, filled with a lively sense of the peril of the calf, and having now arrived at the spot he dashed courageously upon the brute with the intention of braining it.

The wolf turned away from the calf and sprang fiercely at the throat of the boy. He stumbled backward, still striking with the club. The animal dropped to the ground, uninjured, and there it crouched, its keen, white teeth glittering and its fierce eyes shining like coals. It was angered, but apparently not in the least frightened. Meanwhile the cow had hurried to

the calf, obviously with the intention of getting it away as quickly as possible.

Phil put back his hand to draw his knife, but before he could do so the wolf sprang again, and he was compelled to use the club to beat it off. Attacked yet again, the boy retreated, striking fiercely, and striving at the same time to get out his hunting-knife, which he carried in a leather sheath belted to his waist.

While he was thus forced back through the high grass, still thrusting at the wolf, there came to his ears the agreeable sound of rapidly pounding hoofs. He heard a call, in a familiar voice, but without pausing to look about he struck again at the wolf.

Then he heard the hoof falls close by him, heard words shouted at him, and a moment later an arrow whizzed by his ear.

There was not a better bowman among the Indian boys of Oregon than Elijah, the son of Pio-pio-mox-mox, and his stiff elkhorn bow had driven the arrow through the heart of the fierce wolf from the Blue Mountains. He uttered a wild Indian yell of triumph and slipped from the back of his spotted pony.

The wolf tumbled to the ground and, though its vitality was great, was dead in a few minutes. The cow was still trying to coax the calf away from what she evidently considered a dangerous locality.

"That was good," said Phil, dropping his club and standing breathless before the Indian boy. "If you hadn't come up just as you did, I don't know but it would have been all up with me in another minute. I never saw a wolf fight as that one did, though it is not the first time I have had trouble with wolves. If I hadn't jumped lively, he would have had me by the throat."

The Indian boy beamed with delight. It pleased him to be spoken to in that way by one whom he regarded so highly as Phil Curtis. Phil was his ideal white boy and his long-time friend.

"It was good," he admitted. "'Way off there I saw you fighting. I was on my way to the mission. Do you take the wolfskin, or do we ride on?"

"We will take the skin," said Phil; and with the assistance of Elijah he proceeded to strip it from the body of the slain animal.

The boy drew out his arrow very carefully, for to an Indian of that place and time an arrow was a valuable article.

"It is strange," said Elijah, looking at Phil as they were engaged in the work, "but I come to you to tell you of the wolf meeting. Pio-pio-mox-mox, my father, he come, too. He be here pretty soon. You heard about that wolf meeting?"

Phil Curtis was obliged to confess that he had not heard of the wolf meeting, whatever it might be; whereupon it pleased Elijah to be able to explain that the settlers of Oregon had fixed a date and called a great meeting, in which the question of the destruction of the wolves that were ravaging the flocks was to be considered.

They talked of the coming event as they proceeded toward the mission house, Phil walking and Elijah riding his pony. It was to be a great meeting, Elijah said, a wonderful meeting; and it was evident that he imagined that it would partake in large measure of the quality of those spectacular Indian councils with which he was familiar.

"Another big news I bring you," he said, as, looking back, he saw that his father was approaching. "It surprise you to know this big news."

"What is it?" Phil asked, for Elijah had a provoking way of withholding information.

"Matpah is now chief of his Cayuse band."

Phil turned on him in surprise.

"What?"

"It is as I say to you. Matpah is now chief. The old chief die not long ago, and Matpah become chief in his place; and that mean another thing. You can guess what it mean, I think."

"I do not want to guess anything," said Phil, knowing that Elijah referred to the very marked interest which Matpah had shown in Cora Carlton.

His memory harked back to that day by the river, when, leaping upon Matpah almost as the wolf had sought to leap on him, he had caught the Indian youth by the throat, and had thrown him into the water. He had felt at the time that trouble would come of the incident, and now, with this news that Matpah had become chief of his particular Cayuse band, the feeling returned.

Pio-pio-mox-mox galloped up at that instant and greeted Phil Curtis gravely. The Yellow Serpent was a fine-looking Indian, worthy to be the father of so splendid a youth as Elijah. Both were dressed that day in their best. Feathers and fringed clothing showed in profusion; but there was no paint on their faces.

"We buy cattle," said Elijah, with pride.

Phil knew how the fancy of the Oregon Indians had been drawn to the horses, cattle, and sheep which the first and later immigrant trains had brought into the country. The Cayuses did not care so much for the horses of the immigrants, for they had horses of their own; but cattle were something with which they had not been familiar, and they bought them whenever they could.

Marcus Whitman greeted the Yellow Serpent and his

son in his usual genial manner. Mrs. Whitman also tried to make the Indian chief feel that he was one of their best friends. All took dinner together at the mission ; and after some advice from Marcus Whitman, who had no cattle to sell, but was well able to counsel in such a matter, the chief and his son rode away.

Doctor Whitman had talked much with Pio-pio-mox-mox about the great wolf meeting, which was to be held at Champoeg. He knew why the meeting had been called better than the Indian chief did. The American settlers felt that they were without means of protection and defence. They could not rely upon the men of the Hudson Bay Fur Company at Fort Vancouver or Walla Walla, nor upon the French Canadians and mountain trappers. They did not feel that it was wise to call a meeting openly, with the announced intention of forming some kind of government ; but upon the question of the extermination of the wolves all could unite, and when they had come together there would be opportunity for private talk over many things that were now uppermost in the minds of the Americans who had settled in Oregon. Hence the wolf meeting had been called, to meet at Champoeg in the spring.

Marcus Whitman attended that meeting, and among those with him were Phil Curtis and Ben Allen, an ex-

ceptionally lively youth from the state of Indiana, who had come into Oregon not long before.

The French Canadians and the half-breed trappers were chattering at Champoeg when Marcus Whitman and his companions arrived. It was on the first Monday of March, in the year 1843, and it is said that every American who could muster a boat had landed at old Champoeg by ten o'clock that morning. There, in the house of Joseph Gervais, they held their meeting. They talked of the wolves and of wolf bounties, and laid elaborate plans for the destruction of this enemy of the settlers and the farmers. All could agree upon that.

Then the Americans, French voyageurs, and traders went away. When May came they again assembled at old Champoeg. At the previous meeting the Americans had talked privately with each other. Wherever the Anglo-Saxon gathers, one of the first things that he desires is an orderly government, and when the Americans came together again with the trappers and the Hudson Bay men, they had agreed upon a report which, in its substance, was the foundation of the government that was to be.

They presented that report to the May meeting. Then wild discussion arose. All of the Hudson Bay men were against it. Some of the trappers were against it, while others were for it. John Curtis, Phil's father,

led the American trappers who favored the adoption of the report. Tom McKay, who was called a Hudson Bay trapper, yet who really could be said to pay allegiance to no man, seemed to halt between two opinions.

The discussion ended, and the time for voting came. The excitement was intense. The voyageurs seemed to be marshalled to a man against the resolution.

"No!" they thundered, when a vote was taken.

The chairman was about to declare the report lost. In the midst of the excitement the Americans asked for a division. Jo Meek, the trapper, was the first to step forward and demand this.

"Who's for a divide?" he called out. "All in favor of the report and organization, follow me."

He stepped out. John Curtis followed. Tom McKay hesitated, then he stepped to the side of Curtis. Whitman and his companions and the American trappers joined them in a body.

On the other side the Hudson Bay men ranged themselves.

Then a great yell seemed to lift the very roof, for the Americans had a small majority.

"Three cheers for Oregon and the United States!" some one cried.

It was like that shot fired by the embattled farmers at

Concord, which was heard round the world. The wolf meeting had been transformed into an organization of government, and infant Oregon had made its appearance.

As Whitman's party rowed away from Champoege, descending the river in their frail boat, Marcus Whitman's spirits were so light and gay that he was almost hilarious.

"I can see the beginning of the end that I have worked for," he said, measuring the future with the eye of prophecy.

It was truly the beginning of the end. A legislature was chosen not long afterward, and a governor elected, and the selected capital was the new town of Oregon City. Many changes were to occur, many things were to happen, before Oregon became really a part of the United States. America was to be brought to the verge of war with England. Political passions were to rage. The campaign battle-cry of "Fifty-Four Forty, or Fight!" was to be upon almost every American lip. In the end Oregon was to become a territory of the Union. But before that end came in its fulness there were to be many stirring events, many thrilling episodes, and many perilous vicissitudes.

CHAPTER XIV

UMTIPPI, THE MEDICINE MAN

OLD Pio-pio-mox-mox and Elijah came again to the mission one day, dressed as if out for a holiday jaunt.

“We go again to buy cattle,” said Elijah, with his proud smile. “We go a long way this time.”

Elijah had grown into a tall, slender youth, of quick intelligence and animated character. He was one of the finest of the Indian youths of Oregon, and Phil Curtis had grown to like him very much.

The Yellow Serpent sat smiling on his pony beside his son, of whom he was intensely proud. Elijah was educated in the white man’s ways, and to the Yellow Serpent he was wise almost beyond the limits of wisdom.

“Yes, we go a long way,” said Elijah, making his announcement to the Whitmans and to Phil Curtis before the mission door. “We go ’way off, to Californy, to buy many cattle.”

As before, Whitman talked with them ; and they took

dinner with him again, and were served with the best that the mission afforded. Then they departed.

Phil Curtis watched Elijah as he rode away with his father that afternoon, thinking how splendid his young friend looked in his Indian finery as he sat on the back of his spotted pony ; and long afterward he was given cause to recall how well Elijah appeared, how handsome and brave, that afternoon.

It was some time after this departure of Pio-pio-mox-mox and Elijah that Cora Carlton came to Phil, showing a troubled face.

"Two of my best pupils left me to-day," she announced. "They are the daughters of that chief who made a speech to the Sunday-school a month or so ago."

He looked at her gravely.

"Why did they leave?"

"Measles has broken out in that Cayuse band."

"If that is so, they will be going right into it. They ought to have stayed here."

"That's what I said to them ; but the Indians think the disease was contracted from the white people, and that the thing to do is to get away from here as soon as possible. I tried to reason with the girls, but I couldn't do anything with them. They were too much scared."

Measles had broken out in a number of the Indian

villages. Whitman was much distressed. Though he could not credit all that was told him, it was reported that the Cayuses and Nez Percés were dying, like flies, of diseases imported by the whites. It was claimed, too, that before the coming of the immigrants from across the mountains, the Indians of Oregon had enjoyed a high degree of health. Whitman knew better than this, for he was a physician and had given much of his time to professional work among these very Indians.

That first immigrant train had been followed by others. Long and toilsome marches over mountains and deserts, exposure to inclement weather, the strain of alarms and of wearisome watches against savage foes, together with a cruel lack of good water and sufficient food, had bred and fostered disease in these companies of white people. There was much sickness on the way, and even after the promised land of Oregon was gained. Some of these diseases, like measles, had spread among the Indians.

The panic in the school grew. Soon Timuitti came to Phil, greatly frightened.

“Good-by, Boston brother,” he cried.

He stood off from Phil and would not extend his hand.

“Not going to leave us?” said Phil.

“Yes, me go. Others go, too; many others. Bad

spirits working among Boston people, making Indian sick. Indian git sick and die. Me no stay here and git sick."

"There is no sickness here, Timuitti," Phil declared. "You will be safer here than anywhere else."

But Timuitti was not to be quieted so easily.

"Bad spirits working," he insisted. "Me no stay. Timuitti no want to die now."

And he departed.

The scare almost emptied the school.

Reports coming in showed^a that the disease, treated in the Indian fashion, was proving in many cases fatal. Then Whitman went out into the villages, administering to the sick. Sometimes they took his medicines, sometimes they did not. In either case, too often, as soon as he was gone, the Indian doctors and conjurers were called in. Then the treatment he had prescribed was disregarded, resulting frequently in the death of the patient.

"Doct' Whit'n killing the Indians," wailed old Waskema.

"Ay, I warned you," reminded Delaware Tom. "This is their plan to destroy you. They want your lands."

"It is as I said," whispered Dorion. "I told you they wanted this Indian country. They are bewitching

you. They have let many bad spirits loose among you. Soon all the Indians will be dead, and then the Bostons will have the country."

In the midst of this confusion and alarm, when it seemed that matters could not be much worse, Marcus Whitman came to Phil, bringing with him Ben Allen.

"I have been talking with Ben," he said, "and he has agreed to go up among the Indians and do what he can to help them, if you will go with him. Neither of you are doctors, I know; but both of you have had measles, so will be immune, and I can give you some medicines and instructions. Whatever you do, you cannot possibly do much worse than those Indian medicine men. They are simply killing all those who fall sick."

Ben Allen, who had come with a recent immigrant party, and therefore was to a considerable extent a stranger in the land, hailed with delight this opportunity to ride into the hills of Oregon; and he knew that in such a journey he could have no better companion than Phil Curtis, who for so many years had been a trapper boy in the great mountains.

So, taking all the medicines which Whitman could spare, the two rode forth one day to the nearest Indian village.

It was the village of Stikine, one of the Cayuse chiefs. At the entrance they were met by old Waskema. She

supported herself on her crooked, knotted staff, and peered at them from under the tangle of her matted hair. With one withered hand she waved them away.

“The curse of Waskema rest on you!” she croaked in the Indian tongue, which Phil so well understood. “You have said that you are a Cayuse, that your heart is red, though your face is white. Your heart is black — black! You bottle up the spirits down there at Wailatpu. I saw you. When I was there, I saw you. You put them in bottles, and Doct’ Whit’n takes them and goes to where the Indians are sick. He makes the Indians drink of those bottles and then the Indians die. It is witchcraft. It is murder. Doct’ Whit’n is killing the Indians. You are Doct’ Whit’n’s friends. Go! go! go!”

She waved her skinny arm.

Phil urged his pony nearer and sought to reason with her. He tried to tell her that what she had seen him put into bottles was medicine—the white man’s medicine, which, if rightly administered, would cure diseases—would cure the Indians. She would not listen to him.

“Your heart is black!” she shrieked. “Your words are lies! Your breath spreads disease! You call yourself the white Cayuse, but your heart is black!

Back in the village the boys heard a low wailing.

"Another has died even since you came," said Waskema, dramatically. "You breathed toward the lodge where the sick man lay, and now he is dead. It is his squaw that wails. Go! go! go!"

"Go! go!" was yelled at the boys from the village.

It seemed imprudent to ride farther. Nevertheless, Phil ventured to do so. He knew the Indian nature. Had he not spent years in the villages and lodges of the Indians? So, though Waskema waved him back, and voices from the lodges cried to him to go, he rode farther on, and then quietly dismounted.

Ben Allen was not a little alarmed, and his freckled, almost comical, face showed it.

"I don't think I like this at all," he said, glancing about rather wild-eyed. "I came up here to doctor Indians, though I'm no doctor; but I tell you I didn't come up here to be killed!"

Phil smiled at him.

"I'm hoping we'll find that their bark is a good deal worse than their bite. Of course old Waskema hates every white person. She would drive every one of us out of the country or kill us. I don't doubt that. But Stikine, the chief, has been a friend to my father in the past; so I think we will risk staying here."

The boys tied their ponies. When they looked about, they saw here and there a dark Indian face peering at them from some lodge, but only old Waskema stood out in the open. She was shaking with rage, and was mumbling her impotent hate, while still clasping the knotted stick and peering at them with her burning eyes.

"If there ever was a witch that old woman is one," said Ben, with a little shiver.

Ben Allen was by nature jovial and jolly, but he did not see anything of a jovial or jolly character in his present situation. He saw only a foreboding of peril, and was already wishing himself well out of the scrape he felt he was in.

There was a movement at the farther end of the little cluster of Cayuse lodges, and old Stikine came into view. Phil Curtis was glad to see the old chief, and approached him without reserve.

"We were sent up here by Doctor Whitman to aid your people, good Stikine," he said; and then went on to explain more fully the nature of his errand, at the same time displaying some of the medicines which Whitman had sent.

Old Stikine drew back somewhat startled when he beheld the bottles. He remembered Waskema's claim that Doct' Whit'n placed bad spirits in bottles and

sent them forth to the Cayuses. He looked at the medicines and was almost afraid.

"Come with me," he said at last, when Phil repeated the message given by Whitman. "Umtippi, the medicine man, is in the lodge over there. One of the younger chiefs is sick. He has the great disease, which it is said the white people brought into Oregon."

It was not exactly an invitation, but it was enough. Phil passed old Stikine and entered the lodge. The medicine man turned about and stared at him gravely. Umtippi was not arrayed in his sorcerer's garb at the time. Only a little while before he had put out of the lodge the relatives of this young chief, and he had been bending over the sick man when Phil entered. Apparently he was disturbed and displeased.

Ben Allen, who was just outside the lodge, heard Phil explaining to Umtippi why he was there. Then Waskema slipped in by him, and he heard her talking in a wild and excited way to the medicine man. A moment later Phil came out.

"Stikine is not unwilling to help us, if only he can feel that it is safe for him to do so, but he is afraid of Umtippi and Waskema. This subchief has not been sick a great while, I think, and the medicine man has been called in to see what he can do for

him. He will give him a sweat, probably, and then go through some kind of conjuring mummary."

Phil walked slowly away from the lodge, which now held old Waskema and the medicine man, and into which almost immediately Stikine entered. He began to fear that he had made a mistake in coming into the village at all, and that perhaps it would be the part of wisdom to leave at once. He said as much to Ben, as they walked on toward their ponies.

"The Indians are very suspicious, as you see," he remarked. "If you will look, without seeming to glance about, you will notice that we are being watched from every lodge. The Indians believe that Doctor Whitman is a medicine man; not a doctor, as we understand it, but a conjurer, — one who deals in witchcraft, sorcery, and incantations. They think that when an Indian falls sick some medicine man, or some evil spirit, or some person who hates him, has cast a spell over him. To drive away that spell the medicine man is called in. The Cayuses believe the white people have been casting spells on them. The Indians did not have the measles, and these other troubles, before the white men came. So, looking at it from their standpoint, it can be seen how easily they may be willing to think these sicknesses are the results of spells which the white men have worked against them."

"I think I can see that we had better get out of here," said Ben Allen. "I like a little fun, and I like a little adventure, but this is altogether too much fun and adventure for me."

But Phil Curtis, having undertaken to do something for these Indians at the urgent request of Doctor Whitman, was not ready to confess so quickly that he was beaten. So he remained.

That evening he was given encouragement by the arrival of his foster-father, Tilskit. Tilskit was assigned a lodge by Stikine, and he invited Phil Curtis, whom he called his son, to share this lodge with him. So both Phil and Ben Allen found shelter in the unfriendly village; for, of course, wherever Phil went Ben went also.

That night it was given out that Umtippi, the medicine man, was to make a grand effort to drive away the spirit which troubled the young chief. Tilskit said that he intended to be present with Stikine in the lodge of the sick man at the time, and that if Phil desired to accompany him it would be perfectly safe for him to do so, under his protection.

The lodge was filled with the wailing friends of the chief, when Tilskit, and his foster-son, and his son's companion, Ben Allen, followed Stikine into the lodge, which had been converted into a medicine lodge.

Umtippi was arrayed most fantastically. He had on a gorgeous medicine robe of elkskin, which depended from his shoulders and dragged on the ground as he walked. His leggings and his deerskin shirt fairly glittered with painted quills, beads, and shining stones. He stood by the skin cot on which the sick man rested. In his right hand he held his medicine bag of snakeskin, filled with pebbles, which gave forth a rattling sound when he shook it. In his left hand he carried a tambourine-like drum, on which he thumped at intervals. Thus drumming, rattling the snakeskin, and chanting rhythmically, the medicine man executed jerky evolutions, circling and hopping to and fro about the cot, shrieking out at times.

The wilder the gyrations of the medicine man became, the higher rose the wailing of the assembled friends and relatives. Umtippi was making this a great test of his ability as a conjurer. To a certain degree he believed in himself, and in the efficacy of his practice; yet that there was a deep basis of hypocrisy and humbuggery was made apparent before the performance ended.

Understanding well the Cayuse language, Phil Curtis listened attentively to the mumbling of Umtippi. The medicine man claimed that he had discovered the source of the sickness which troubled the chief. A white man had transformed himself into a weasel, and had insin-

uated himself into the very vitals of the chief. If that weasel could be driven out, the chief would recover. If it could not be driven out, the chief would die.

That Umtippi, like Waskema, hated the white men violently, and wished to create against them a feeling of enmity, was quite evident to Phil Curtis when he understood what he was saying.

The gyrations and dramatic pantomime, the shaking of the snakeskin, and the thumping of the tambourine drum, grew constantly louder and wilder, and louder and wilder rose the wails of the young chief's relatives and friends.

Suddenly, at the very pinnacle of his performance, the medicine man dropped to the ground, shrieking and raving. The mourning relatives screamed in their excitement. The medicine man thrust his long arms under the skins that covered the cot. His lips foamed and his eyes rolled. He appeared to be engaged in a terrible struggle. Then, with a yell of triumph, he drew from beneath the robes which covered the chief the body of a weasel. Rising with this in his hands he threw it to the ground. Then he leaped upon it, and stamped it into the very earth, screaming out his hate, rage, and triumph.

There can be no doubt that this performance, startling and even terrible though it may seem, produced a

strong effect upon the sick man, who believed implicitly in Umtippi; and if there is such a thing as the mind controlling disease, there can be little doubt that this dramatic climax would have a favorable influence.

Ben Allen, who had been greatly astonished by what he saw, though he did not understand a word of what he heard, was staring into the sick man's eyes; and he saw the young chief rise from his cot and glare at the weasel, which the medicine man was stamping into the earth. He heard the sick man yell almost as loudly and dramatically as Umtippi himself. Then he saw him fall back in an exhausted and fainting condition.

"You see what we have to contend with," said Phil to Ben when they were once more together in the lodge which they were occupying with Tilskit. "That weasel which the medicine man dragged forth represented some white man who is supposed by these Indians to have bewitched the sick chief."

"But where did it come from?" Ben asked, for the thing had puzzled him.

"From under the robes on the cot, of course. Old Umtippi slid it in there before he began his conjuring performance; but you can never make an Indian believe that he did anything of the kind."

"Do you think the chief will get well?"

"That is to be seen. He may get well, and he may not; but whether he does or not will not depend upon anything that Umtippi has done. If he dies, though, I think there will be trouble for Umtippi. From what Tilskit and Stikine say, he made a test case of this young chief's sickness. That shows, at any rate, that he believed from the first that the chief would get well. If the chief dies, it may go hard with him."

"Why so? How is that?"

"The conjurer himself may be killed. It has been done before among these Indians, and it may be done again."

Ben Allen looked at Phil earnestly and uneasily.

"Say," he said, "you're not fooling about that?"

"Not in the least."

"Then all I can say is that I don't care to try to doctor Indians. I am not a doctor, anyway; but I was willing to do what I could just to please Whitman, and because I thought it would be fun to take a trip to the Indian villages. What if we should fail now? What if we should give medicine to one of these Indians to try to cure him, and then he dies?"

Instead of answering promptly, Phil looked steadily at the lodge door.

"I will talk to Tilskit and Stikine about that. Anyway, I am afraid we shall have to take some risk."

CHAPTER XV

PRISONERS IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE

THE next morning Tilskit departed from the village of Stikine. But before he went away he had a long talk with Phil, in which he expressed his belief that the boys had not much to fear, though he was equally sure the Indians would not permit them to come into competition with the medicine man as a doctor. He also said he had talked with Stikine, and that Stikine had promised to permit Phil and Ben to remain in that lodge so long as they wished to stay in the village. At the same time he advised them not to remain, for he believed they could do no good, and harm might come to them from it in the end.

"You have sick in your village," said Phil. "We can go there."

Tilskit looked displeased.

"No!" he said, and he said it emphatically. "My Cayuses would not like that. It is true we have some that are sick, but our medicine men can make them well. If they cannot, then they must die. If it is the

will of the Great Spirit, they will die, and no one can hinder."

This conversation was held with Tilskit in the Cayuse language; and though Ben Allen sat by and listened, he understood not a word; but when Tilskit was gone, Phil acquainted him with what the chief had said.

"In some things Tilskit is just like all the other Cayuses," was Phil's statement. "He thinks he is more civilized. He calls himself a Christian, and has united with Whitman's church down at the mission; but you see he is just as superstitious as he ever was. He still believes in the power of the medicine men; or, if he does not believe in their power, he is afraid of them, and that amounts to nearly the same thing so far as we are concerned."

"A nice sort of father you've got," said Ben Allen, wrinkling his homely face in a smile.

Ben Allen was truly a homely lad. He always spoke of himself as "the unhandsomest boy that ever came out of Indianny." His mouth was wide, his nose long, his eyes of a light color, and his hair carrotty; but, in spite of his appearance, he was pure gold. He had a big heart in his big body. He could laugh and joke, and he could romp and play; but he had serious times, and he was always as true as steel.

"I think a good deal of my Indian father," said Phil, in reply. "He has his faults, like all these Indians. Still, I think he is the best Cayuse I ever knew, with perhaps the exception of his son, Timuitti. I wish Timuitti were here now, for I should like to talk with him."

After further consideration of the question that was now before them, the boys decided that they would hold in abeyance their desire to do something for the sick in Stikine's village.

"We will try to gain the good-will of these Indians first," said Phil. "Then later, when they see that we mean well, perhaps they will let us do something. We are not doctors; but surely we could do better, if we followed Whitman's instructions, than that old medicine man, Umtippi."

As the boys walked about the village, after the departure of Tilskit, they noticed that wherever they went they were closely observed.

When they returned to the lodge which had been set apart for Tilskit, and which was now theirs to use, they were unpleasantly surprised to discover that their guns, which they had left there, had disappeared. Phil had also left behind his hunting-knife attached to his belt, and that was gone too.

Ben Allen made a wry face.

"It is a good thing I had my knife in my pocket, or I reckon they would have taken that."

He drew it out—a strong jack-knife with two blades.

"Keep it out of sight," said Phil. "These Indians intend to strip us. The disappearance of our guns has a bad look to me."

They were still further disturbed when they found that their ponies had been led away and turned loose with the herd of Indian ponies, which was guarded by some Cayuse warriors.

"May we take our ponies?" Phil asked, approaching the herd.

The herders waved them back.

"See Stikine," they said.

When Phil saw Stikine a little later, he obtained no satisfaction. The chief hesitated, then prevaricated, then lied outright.

"They are not your ponies," he declared.

Phil interpreted this to Ben Allen.

"But they are our ponies!" Ben asserted rather warmly. "Don't I know our ponies? They were right there in the midst of the others. What does he mean by that?"

Phil did not answer until they were at some distance from Stikine's lodge.

"The meaning is that we are not to be permitted to leave."

Ben looked at Phil with something like dismay showing in his homely face.

"Then we are prisoners?"

"It begins to look like it."

To test the matter, he walked with Ben to the farther end of the village. When they tried to pass out into the hills, they found they were not to be permitted to do so. Two stalwart Indians, who had been lounging not far away, rose up with weapons in their hands and motioned them back.

Phil returned toward the lane of lodges, and Ben followed him.

"The only thing to do," he said, "is to pretend that we are not anxious to get away."

"We ought to have gone away yesterday, when that old hag told us to!"

"But we didn't. We thought we were doing right to stay. Whitman would have wanted us to stay. Now we will have to remain, whether we wish to or not, until —"

"Until what?"

"Until we can get our guns, recapture our ponies, and escape by night."

"Not to-night?"

"No, it may be quite a while before we can get away. We shall have to use patience."

Phil Curtis was even less pleased with the situation than he was willing to confess to Ben. Still, he hoped that Tilskit would return soon, or that some other friend would arrive. Because he was the adopted son of a chief so well known as Tilskit, he did not really fear that immediate harm would come to him or his companion; but with Waskema raging against the whites, and all the other Indian enemies of the settlers mouth-ing their anger, what the outcome would be Phil was not prepared to say.

Stepping up to a small tree with swinging branches, he asked Ben Allen to let him have the knife. Ben took it from his pocket and passed it to him. Phil cut off a stout branch that was free of knots, and sitting down began to whittle at it.

"What are you doing?" Ben asked.

"I think I shall make a bow and then some arrows. They may come in handy, since our guns are gone. I have been thinking that if we are not watched too closely, we can slip out into the hills some dark night, and on foot make our way back to the mission. But that is not the chief reason why I am whittling at this stick of wood. If we are quiet, and seem to be contented, the Indians will not watch us so closely."

The situation seemed a most peculiar one to Ben Allen. He had never contemplated anything just like it. He felt that he was a prisoner in this Cayuse village, yet he was at liberty to walk about and do pretty much as he pleased, so long as he did not try to leave.

Phil began to talk about bow-making and about arrows: how the arrows were feathered, tipped, grooved, and ornamented, saying that the bows and arrows of each tribe differed materially in make and appearance; so that any one familiar with such things could, on seeing an Indian bow or arrow, tell what tribe the maker belonged to.

"You remember that bow of elkhorn with which Elijah shot the wolf?" he said. "That was made by the Crows. Elijah bought it of a Crow, and paid for it with beaver skins."

Then he recalled to Ben Allen the peculiarities of that wonderful elkhorn bow, which had been the pride of Elijah's heart. It had been made of thin strips of elkhorn, joined and glued together, highly polished and ornamented. It was very stiff and hard to bend, but in the hands of a strong and practised bowman like Elijah it was a marvellous weapon, able to hurl an arrow a distance of four hundred yards.

He told Ben that the Sioux made a bow of horn

which is also very strong; and that both the Sioux and the Cheyennes strengthen their bows by strips of sinew which they glue to the backs.

The one which he himself fashioned from that tree bough was a clumsy and not very effective weapon; but, as he said, it was better than nothing. Later he made some unfeathered arrows, whose points he hardened by heating them in the fire which the boys were permitted to build in their lodge.

Throughout the greater part of that day, and far into the night, the booming of Umtippi's medicine drum was heard, accompanied by his weird chanting. There was much sickness in the village, and the old sorcerer was, in consequence, a busy and an important man. Wherever he went he seemed to be accompanied by Waskema, whom the Indians feared and believed in as if she were a veritable medicine man herself. They were sure that she could forecast the future, and also that she could call down from the skies terrible maladies on whoever opposed her.

Neither Umtippi nor Waskema paid the slightest attention to the boys throughout the whole of that day, nor for several days thereafter. They seemed to have agreed to ignore them, as if they were of no consequence, or beneath notice.

In spite of the sickness, and of the howling and

drumming of the medicine man, the Indian children romped and played their games. They rode their ponies; they had their shooting matches with bows and arrows; they indulged in swimming races in the river which ran hard by. Childish yells and shrill laughter filled the air almost constantly.

"I rather think I should like to be an Indian boy myself," said Ben Allen, as he watched these frolicsome youngsters. "I don't see that they are ever punished, no matter what they do. It is certain they do not have to go to school, except when some white man like Whitman coaxes them into his mission. They have very little work to do, if any."

"And from little savages they grow up to become big savages."

Ben wreathed his homely face in a smile.

"Well, I don't know as that is so bad, after all. When I was a little chap I thought I should like to run away to sea, get shipwrecked on some island, and play Robinson Crusoe. Afterward, when I began to hear so much about this Western country, I had an ambition to be a trapper or a hunter, or perhaps even an Indian."

"Is that what brought you to Oregon?"

Ben smiled again.

"Well, not exactly, but that is part of it. I was on a farm, you know."

"No, I didn't know anything about it. I don't think you ever told me."

"I was on a farm, working. My parents had died. I think I told you that. I didn't want to become simply an Indianny clodhopper. I heard about Whitman's party. He was wanting people, all he could get, to go with him to Oregon. Says I to myself, 'Ben Allen, here's your chance.' And so I came. I wanted adventure."

It was Phil's time to smile, and even to laugh.

"I think you are finding all the adventure you care for."

"Well, yes; but you see it was not just this kind of adventure that I expected to find. I wanted to trap, and to hunt game, and to fish in the rivers. You don't know what stories I heard of the wonderful amount of fish there is in the Columbia."

"That is all true," said Phil.

With talks like this the boys beguiled the time, which, in spite of all they could do, passed tediously enough. They found they were not to be permitted to leave the village. When they went to sleep at night, a stalwart Indian lay stretched across the lodge entrance and another slept on the ground just outside. They could hardly move without arousing one of these guards.

They were not only not permitted to administer to any of the sick Indians, but all their medicines were destroyed, except some in the form of powders, which Phil had kept in an inner pocket of his jacket.

The boys were much disturbed one day by the appearance in Stikine's village of Matpah, whose enmity Phil had reason to fear. Matpah stared when he saw them there, and afterward they noticed him talking closely with Stikine and Umtippi; but he departed without any open demonstration against Phil, much to the latter's relief.

"It seems a little strange that Tilskit does not come back," said Phil one day.

"I have been rather hoping that Whitman himself would come," answered Ben, "though I don't know that he could do anything for us."

"I have not expected Mr. Whitman. He probably thinks that we are going from one village to another, doing what we can. He hasn't the least idea of the condition of things up here. He trusts the Indians, and he doesn't understand them very well."

As the boys talked, sitting on a slight elevation that overlooked the valley-like margin of the stream, old Umtippi, the medicine man, was "mixing medicine" just below them. This statement is not to be taken in the literal sense that he was concocting heal-

ing drugs or brewing medicinal roots and herbs. He had a great fire going there by the brink of the river, and over this fire a pot was swung; but there was no medicine in the pot, only various things which he considered charms, "eye of newt and toe of frog," after the style of the witches of Macbeth.

As the stuff in the pot boiled and bubbled, sending up clouds of steam, the medicine man postured by the river, swinging his medicine bag of snakeskin. He was appealing to the spirits of the mountains, to the spirits of the fire and of the water, in the belief that by so doing he would acquire power to heal the sick of the village.

Many warriors and squaws were watching the old medicine man, and he knew it. He was like an actor before the footlights, who is trying to thrill and influence his audience. It was very plain that the old sorcerer believed himself to be a great man.

As Phil Curtis and Ben Allen sat thus looking at Umtippi, a stone, loosened by Ben's foot, started down the hillside, bounding and rebounding. With a thundering crash it struck the boiling caldron, scattering the fire in every direction, bowling the medicine man himself over, and knocking him into the river.

Phil started up in dismay.

"Did you do that purposely?" he asked.

Ben Allen seemed to be hiding a laugh.

“Well, no, I didn’t do it purposely. That is, I didn’t mean to have the stone go just where it did. I thought I could roll it down there, and give him a little scare, and he wouldn’t know that I had anything to do with it.”

The astonished Indians were voicing their surprise and anger in yells. A number of them rushed down to the water, plunged in, and, seizing the struggling Umtippi, dragged him out.

If the situation had not been so serious, Phil could have laughed. The pompous medicine man of a few moments before was now a draggled fright. The stripes of paint with which he had ornamented his face had run together in a strange mass of color. His elaborate medicine robe of elkskin was soaked and dripping. His feathered hair hung down his back in a wet wisp, and each single dyed porcupine quill that ornamented his deerskin shirt and leggings seemed to be sparkling with raindrops. He was in a great rage, too, and he sputtered and fumed with a fury that would have put old Waskema to shame.

It did not take Ben Allen long to learn that his little piece of pleasantry, as he had thought it, was likely to have serious consequences. Both he and Phil were seized by the angry Indians, and confined

in their lodge, with a guard stationed at the entrance. Then they heard a great powwowing in the medicine lodge, and they knew that the subject of the insult to the medicine man was under discussion. Ben Allen was undeniably frightened. Phil Curtis was uneasy. What might come of it all he could only guess.

The serious results which Phil more than half anticipated were not to fall at once, at any rate. Before the meeting ended, a loud wailing was heard on the border of the village. This grew louder and louder, and was joined in by many feminine voices.

Stepping to the entrance, in spite of the presence of the guard, Phil looked out and saw Pio-pio-mox-mox. The old chief was surrounded by a retinue of wailing Indians, and he sat on his pony with head bowed in an attitude of deep grief.

Pio-pio-mox-mox rode slowly by, through the narrow avenue between the lodges; and though he glanced at Phil, as the latter stood boldly in the lodge entrance, hoping to attract his attention, he seemed scarcely to see him. A great weight settled on Phil's heart.

"Elijah is dead," he said, turning back into the lodge and speaking to Ben Allen. "I don't know anything about it, or how it happened; but I know

from the manner of Pio-pio-mox-mox that Elijah is dead."

It was too true. Elijah, whom Phil had seen riding away so gayly in his Indian finery, lay dead at Sutter's Fort, in California; and the Yellow Serpent, heart-sore and bewildered, was returning to his people.

Pio-pio-mox-mox stopped in the village of Stikine to rest before going on to his own village, which was some distance away. He came to the lodge where Phil was now held as a prisoner with Ben Allen; and in a slow, sorrowful manner tried to acquaint Phil with the whole story of the terrible tragedy.

"We went to Sutter's Fort," he said, speaking in Cayuse. "We went there, as you know, to buy cattle. At first the white men treated us well. We had not enough peltries, so we went into the mountains to hunt more. We hoped to buy many cattle. There were other Indians with us; for though we rode alone from Waiilatpu, we joined other Cayuses who were waiting for us, and who went on with us into California. In the California mountains, while we were hunting to get more peltries, we had a fight with a band of Indian robbers, and we captured from them twenty-two horses. Ah, those horses!"

Old Pio-pio-mox-mox looked up at Phil with streaming eyes.

"It was those horses! They were ours, by the laws of war. We brought them to Sutter's Fort. Some white men there claimed we had stolen the horses from them. They said we must give them up.

"'No,' said Elijah; 'we will not give them up. They are ours. We fought for them with the robbers in the mountains, and they are ours. We will fight for them now, but that we keep them.'

"Then the white men drew their guns. They fired upon us; and Elijah—my son, Elijah—fell. He was dead! We were frightened, then, and we turned and ran, lest we should all be slain. We leaped on our horses, and rode far, far away from Sutter's Fort. As we rode away, we heard the booming of the cannon that sent the great shot tearing over our heads. We left everything behind us, and we fled scarcely fast enough, for the white men followed hard in pursuit."

Pio-pio-mox-mox rocked to and fro and wept again.

"That was six weeks ago. Now I am here. Tomorrow I go on to my own village. I have been kind to the white men, I have been their friend; yet this is what I have received in return! Out there is Elijah's horse—his beautiful spotted horse! Elijah shall nevermore ride him!"

The return of Pio-pio-mox-mox with this terrible

story to the Indians of the Walla Walla was like applying a lighted match to a bonfire ready to be kindled. The story flew from lodge to lodge, and from village to village, as if on the wings of the wind. Pio-pio-mox-mox had been the especial friend of the white men. He had been the champion and the adherent of Marcus Whitman ever since that faithful missionary had established himself at Waiilatpu. And this was his reward! His son, Elijah, — his only son, Elijah, — who had been baptized at the Methodist mission on the Columbia, — Elijah, the kind-hearted, Christian boy, had fallen before the rancorous shot of a white man!

Before the old chief left Stikine's village and passed on his way to his own home, Phil Curtis knew that the situation in which he and Ben Allen were now placed was most serious. Ben had grossly insulted Umtippi. A white man in far-away California had killed Elijah. Marcus Whitman, the Indians firmly believed, was working spells to do them harm, and they believed also that these youths themselves were in the village of Stikine with black intent in their hearts. The outlook was not pleasant, and Phil knew it.

Yet faithful old Pio-pio-mox-mox had said a good word for Phil and his friend before leaving Stikine's

village. He had impressed upon Stikine a remembrance of the fact that Phil Curtis was a Cayuse by adoption ; that he was the white son of the chief, Tilskit. But for this matters might have gone much harder with the two boys than they did at that time.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ESCAPE

THE kind words said by Pio-pio-mox-mox in behalf of Phil Curtis caused no perceptible change in the attitude of the Indians toward the boys. Phil and Ben were kept confined closely in the lodge, and were watched constantly.

"If conditions become too unpleasant, we will make a desperate effort to get away," said Phil.

"If conditions become too unpleasant?" cried Ben Allen. "I don't think they could be much worse."

"Yes, they could be a great deal worse. So far, we are in no personal danger. We are only deprived of our liberty."

A few days later, however, the situation took so serious a turn that even Phil Curtis admitted that the time had come for them to escape, if they could.

An Indian boy came into Stikine's village, bringing startling news from the Waiilatpu mission. He claimed that while lying in bed at the mission, pretending to be asleep, he had heard the particulars of a plot to kill all

the Cayuse Indians. Mr. Spalding had come down from the mission at Lapwai, and he and Doctor Whitman had discussed the plan together. Whitman, the boy said, proposed to send out "medicine" to all the Cayuse villages. This "medicine" was to be poison, which would wipe the Indians from the face of the earth.

The telling of this story in Stikine's village created the most intense excitement. It seemed to bear out the claims of Waskema, that Phil Curtis and Ben Allen were merely Whitman's emissaries, whose purpose was not to heal, but to kill.

When Phil heard that story from the lips of Stikine, the alarm which he felt was more for Marcus Whitman than for himself. He tried to make it clear to Stikine that what the boy had overheard, if he had really overheard anything, was a conference between Whitman and Spalding concerning the best methods of combating the diseases with which the Indians were afflicted. The boy had heard the missionaries speak of "medicines" to be sent among the Indians. That was enough for an excited and ignorant mind to found the wildest and most improbable story upon.

Stikine listened gravely.

"It is very strange," was his comment.

Then he went away.

"I shall not hesitate any longer," said Phil. "If it

can be done, we will get out of this lodge, and out of the village, to-night."

"How can we do it? You will find me as ready to go as you are."

Phil tapped the breast of his fringed hunting-shirt. Only one guard was on duty before the lodge entrance, and this one, as they had discovered, understood no English. Nevertheless, Phil spoke in a low tone:—

"The few powders that I have here, which the Indians didn't find, are of opium, or something like that. Whitman divided them up into doses, and told me never to give one unless an Indian was suffering very great pain. He said that one of them would put a man to sleep and cause him to sleep several hours."

Ben Allen's homely face shone with interest and excitement.

"If you can do it! Say, that's great! We ought to have tried it before."

"I wasn't ready to leave. I haven't really wanted to leave until the last few days. Now we have got to leave."

"We are in danger of being killed here?"

"I don't know. I have felt all along that the fact that I am considered a Cayuse by these people would be a protection, and would protect you as well as me. I want to get away now to give warning to Marcus Whitman."

He explained the situation as he saw it. The condition of affairs in that village was no doubt a type of that in every village. All the Cayuses were becoming daily more incensed against the whites. Phil feared a massacre, or a series of them, and a general Indian war.

At intervals throughout the day he and Ben Allen discussed various plans for escaping that night in the darkness. Fortunately the moon did not rise until late. In their walks about the village, before their close confinement in the lodge, they had observed everything very narrowly. They knew the location of each lodge, and what particular chief or warrior occupied it. They knew just where the ponies were kept and how they were guarded. They had observed the configuration of the surrounding country and the trails which led to and from the village.

As night drew on, Ben became exceedingly nervous. If Phil Curtis had not kept him from doing so, he would have gone continually to the entrance to look out.

Many strange Indians came into the village that day. There was much suppressed excitement, together with frequent conferences and a great deal of talk. With the coming of darkness drums began to boom in the council lodge.

"I wish I knew what is to be said in that lodge to-night," was Phil's thought.

What he feared was that warriors were gathering to march against the white settlements. Once, while staying with his father in a Sioux village beyond the mountains, he had seen a war party prepare and set off against the Pawnees. The same excitement he now observed had been noticeable then. He remembered how the war drums had boomed in the big council lodge of the Sioux. He had gone in with his father, and had there listened to the bombastic and fiery speeches of the chiefs and the head men. Then, the next day, he had seen the warriors ride away in war-paint and decked with feathers.

There were many good qualities in Stikine. Until the time of their imprisonment he had treated the boys almost as if they were invited guests. The food given them was as good as the Cayuses had themselves, and it was supplied in abundance.

This food Phil and Ben cooked over their own fire, which they built usually out of doors, though sometimes, in rough weather, they used the fire-hole in the centre of the lodge.

As they prepared their simple meal of soup and meat this evening, Phil engaged the guard in a friendly conversation. He inquired concerning the meaning of the drum beating and the excited gathering of the Indians in council.

"You would like to go?" said Phil. "I should like to attend the council myself."

The guard looked longingly in the direction of the council lodge, but shook his head. He would not leave his post, nor would he give definite answers.

Phil ladled out some of the soup into a bowl made from a wild gourd.

"It is good," he said, speaking to the guard.

Then he drank the soup, smacking his lips with much gusto.

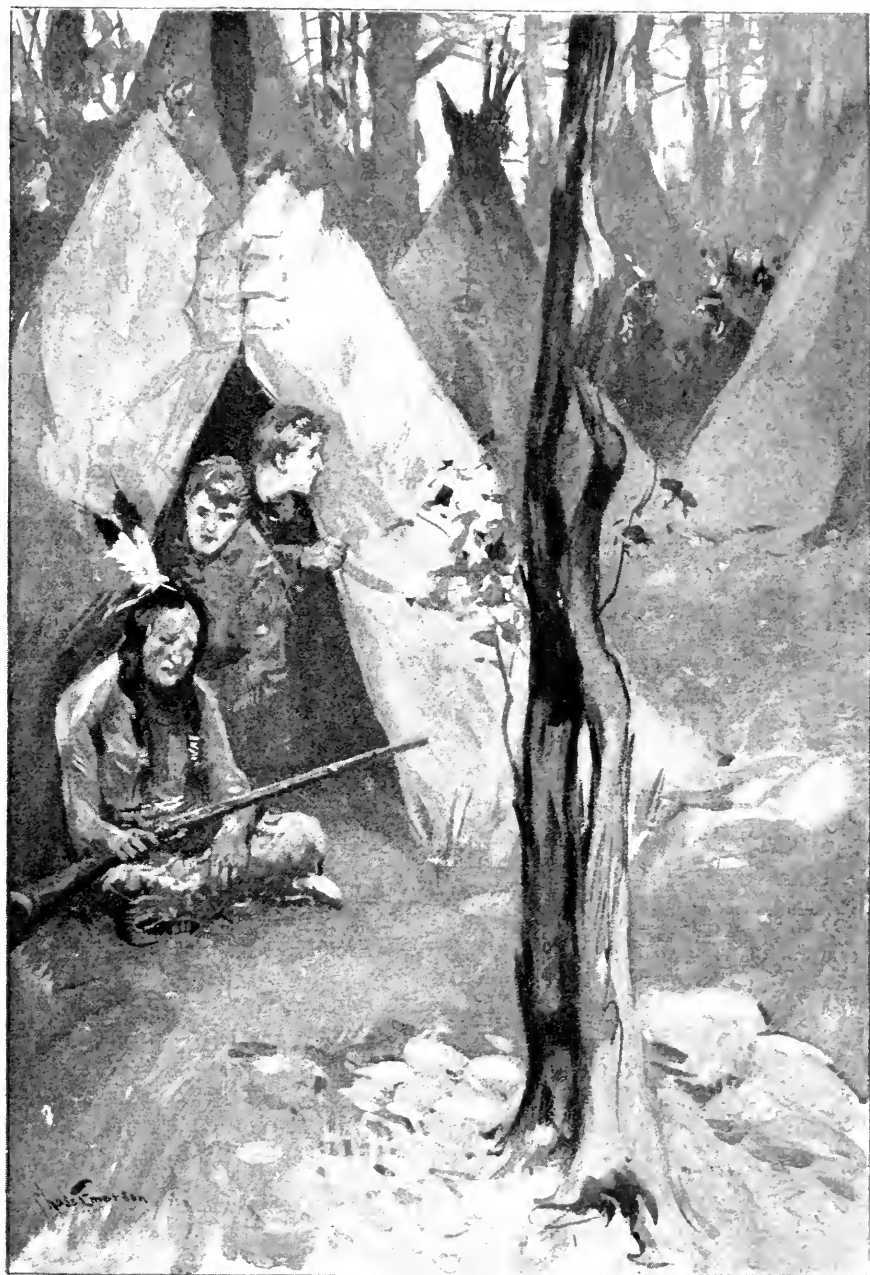
He saw the guard look hungrily at the bowl.

"I can get you some," Phil volunteered.

Turning back into the lodge, he dipped another gourdful, contriving at the same time to drop into it two of the powders which he had kept secreted so long in the inner pocket of his hunting-shirt.

Winter was at hand, and the night was cool, with the wind blowing fresh from the mountains. The steaming soup in the bowl was tempting, and the unsuspecting guard drank it greedily.

So long a time passed after that before Phil noticed any effects of the opiate that he began to fear the drug had lost its virtue. Ben Allen was in a fit of nervous terror. He was almost afraid to look at the Indian lest the latter's suspicions should be aroused; but Phil continued to talk to the guard, and to speak of what was



"NOW IS OUR TIME, PHIL WHISPERED."

probably occurring in the council house, where the drums were now booming at a great rate and orators' voices could be heard.

To Phil's great joy the Indian at last began to show signs of drowsiness. He yawned and stretched his arms; then he walked to and fro in front of the lodge to drive away the strange feeling of sleepiness that was oppressing him. By and by, losing his sense of caution, he sat down in front of the lodge, with his gun across his knees.

Indians were still passing to and fro between the lodges, but the attention of every one was centred on the big lodge where the council was in progress. Phil could have cried for joy, when at last, overpowered by the drug, the guard leaned heavily back against the lodge covering, letting his head fall upon his breast.

"Now is our time," Phil whispered.

In another moment he and Ben Allen were outside. Stepping over the sleeping sentinel, who sat almost in the entrance, Phil moved quickly round the lodge. Ben followed closely at his heels, shivering with excitement.

"If we had our guns," said Ben.

"Yes, I have been thinking of that. I know where they are, and I will get them. You stay here."

He looked about in the darkness.

"In those bushes over there will be a better place for you to hide. Come!"

He took Ben by the hand, and together they walked toward the bushes.

"I will be back in just a minute. Don't move. Don't stir, no matter what happens. Even if the guard is discovered, stay right where you are."

"All right," said Ben; but his voice trembled.

Phil turned away in the darkness, disappearing like a shadow. He was gone less than five minutes, though to Ben Allen the time was interminable. He returned without the guns, but he had his hunting-knife in its leather case and a little cooked food wrapped in a roll of bark.

"I couldn't find the guns," he said; "but we're in luck to get these things. I was afraid to make too much of a search. Put some of this meat in your pockets. Now I'm ready to see what we can do, if you are."

"You lead the way," said Ben. "I'll follow you, and I'll do my best to keep from stumbling, though I can't see anything hardly. What I am most afraid of is the dogs. One of them came sniffing around the bushes while you were gone. It made my hair creep, but when I kicked at him he ran away."

Phil headed into the darkness that bordered the

village. As soon as he and Ben were beyond the farthest lodge, they turned at right angles and passed up over the timbered hill which led to the small pasture where the ponies were herded at night.

Phil Curtis seemed to move with the lightness and certainty of a cat. Ben Allen blundered and stumbled along behind him. Phil was a trained mountaineer, with almost the instinct of an Indian in such matters, while Ben was a clumsy farmer lad, wholly new to such experiences.

When they had gained the vicinity of the pony herd, Phil went forward to locate the guards. He knew that it was customary to have two night herders in charge of the ponies. On this night he could find but one, and he came to the conclusion that the other had gone into the village to attend the council.

Having discovered the position of the guard, Phil now began a search for bridles and halters. It was slow work, and he knew that Ben Allen would think he had been gone a very long time. The only thing he could find was a rawhide rope, but his fingers closed on it eagerly. With this in his hand he approached a pony that was lying down. It sprang up as he drew near it, but he got the rawhide about its neck, succeeded in making a slip noose, and led the pony away in spite of its struggles.

The noise alarmed the guard, and he spoke out in a sharp, excited tone, disclosing the fact that the second guard was stationed at the lower end of the pasture some distance away. He called to this man and was answered by him.

"Wolves troubling the ponies," said one of them. "They keep them frightened all the time. Two wolves passed along the ridge over there just at nightfall."

If Phil had been seen by either of the guards, as he crept from point to point in his search for accoutrements, he would no doubt have been mistaken for one of the wolves mentioned, and very possibly an arrow or a bullet would have been sent in his direction.

Standing now with the rawhide noose about the neck of the pony, and one hand over the pony's nose, he waited like a statue in the darkness; then finding that neither of the guards was coming in his direction, he led the pony quietly along toward the point where Ben Allen lay in concealment.

"Stay right here, and hold it until I can bring up another," he whispered, passing the rawhide lariat to Ben.

"I began to think something had happened to you, you stayed so long."

"Yes, I was gone a good while; but these things can't be done in a hurry. Don't worry if I should be

gone even longer this time. You must try to keep the pony quiet."

Ben Allen rubbed its nose.

"I can keep the brute quiet all right, I think. I am used to horses. One of the things I hated about that farm work back in Indianny was that I had to take care of the horses all the time. I hope you won't be gone long."

Phil was moving away even before Ben finished speaking. He was not so successful in this second attempt. He could find no lariat. Taking one of the ponies at last by the foretop, he tried to lead it, but it resisted his efforts and becoming frightened broke away from him. Instantly there was great confusion among the other ponies. The guards began to shout to each other.

In his desperation Phil laid hold of the mane of the first pony he came to. Springing on its back, he gouged its sides with his heels and sought to ride it out of the herd, which was now a confused, moving mass. One of the herders, who had dropped on his face, knowing he could see better in that position with the sky as a background, caught an indistinct view of the figure of Phil mounted on the back of the plunging pony. Then a rifle cracked, sending a ball singing past Phil's ears, and announcing to the village by its

loud report that something was wrong with the pony herd.

In spite of the peril of his situation, Phil Curtis did not lose self-control. He was a good horseman, even though placed under a great disadvantage; and by swaying his body from side to side, striking with his heels, and dragging at the mane, he rode the pony out of the herd.

The confusion was now a wild uproar. From the village came shouts and calls. The herders yelled. A number of the ponies, stricken with panic, stampeded in a body.

"This way!" said Phil, as he reached Ben Allen's side. "I was afraid you would be gone. Now, can you follow me? We've got to ride, and ride lively. Keep close at my heels, and don't get lost in the darkness."

"Ride ahead," said Ben. "I will do my best."

Scarcely had he said it when one of the guards came racing in their direction. Phil clattered away on his bridleless pony. A portion of the stampeding herd came swinging by. Ben Allen could not see a rod in advance of him, and he soon discovered, to his consternation, that he was not following Phil Curtis at all, but some of the stampeding ponies.

"Well, this is a go!" was his thought. "What I am to do, even if I'm not captured, I don't know. But

whatever comes, I'll not go back into that village if I can help it."

By drawing in with all his might on the choking lariat, he succeeded in reducing the speed of the pony, and at last brought it to a halt. The rest of the herd had raced on, and were soon out of sight. Stillness and darkness reigned. Afar off there was a confused sound, which he knew was made by the searching Indians. Still farther away he heard the mournful howling of wolves.

Now that he was left to his own resources, Ben Allen showed that he was a lad who could rely upon himself. As long as Phil Curtis had been with him to direct and advise, he had trusted to Phil's guidance.

"I shall know where I am, or at least what direction is east, when the sun rises," was his thought. "Even if I can't find Phil, I think I can find my way out of these hills."

Looking up, he began to study the stars. He picked out the Big Dipper, and by it located the North Star; but when he had thought over the matter, he concluded that it might be better to remain where he was, or in that vicinity, until morning.

By and by, when the moon rose, he found what seemed to be a secure hiding-place in a cleft of the hills. There he tied his pony with the rawhide lariat, and putting his back against a rock, he sat down to think

over his situation and to pass the night as well as he could.

“I’m in a pickle, but better off, likely, than if we’d remained in the village,” he mused. “It’s too bad that I became separated from Phil. When morning comes, I shall try to work toward the lower country if I don’t find him. I shall have to go about it pretty carefully, too, for these Indians will be hunting for the ponies and for us. I can give them a pretty good race, though, on that Cayuse. He is a goer when he gets started.”

Thus thinking, and feeling very tired as his excitement wore away, Ben Allen fell asleep, and slept soundly until the sun was high in the sky and shining in his face.

CHAPTER XVII

PHIL'S ADVENTURES

PHIL CURTIS was considerably disconcerted and very much distressed when he discovered that Ben Allen was not following him.

He made this discovery before he had gone very far, and he altered the course of his pony, swinging it out of its direct line of flight by pulling heavily on its mane and pressing against its body with his knees. The noise of clattering hoofs was greater in the direction in which he now urged the pony, and he thought it likely that Ben Allen was somewhere in the midst of that uproar.

Behind him and before him, as well as upon each hand, there was also a confused thundering of hoofs. The yells of the night herders were still lifting in an ear-splitting way, and far behind, toward the village, was the confused sound of a great commotion.

"The whole village seems to be out after us," was his thought, as he fled on.

Not seeing Ben Allen, nor hearing anything of him, he began to call aloud. There was no answer — only the

thudding of hoofs, and the yells which still echoed on the disturbed air of the night.

"I'm afraid Ben will fall into trouble. This is new business to him, riding like mad over such rough ground, and no doubt he's scared blue. There's no telling which way he has taken. I suppose he's gone in whatever direction that pony headed for, if it hasn't thrown him and bolted before now."

Again Phil called, venturing to raise his voice to a still higher pitch, but there was no reply.

The headlong pace at which the pony was carrying him was in itself a menace. There was danger that at any time it might stumble in the darkness, and, hurling its rider over its head, kill him or so injure him as to render him helpless. Appreciating the gravity of his situation, Phil by degrees pulled the pony farther and farther to the right, until by and by he had the satisfaction of seeing the last of the stampeded herd scamper by.

"But I'm not safe yet," was his conclusion; and he still bore to the right, finding some level ground where travelling was not so difficult.

Now that he had the animal out of the herd, he found it not so unmanageable. It had been well broken by its Indian master, who had ridden it in many a wild chase. The Cayuse ponies were a good breed,

stocky and well built, and, for Indian ponies, very reliable.

Sitting on the pony, in a thick growth that screened him well in the darkness, Phil listened long for some sound which might indicate the position or the fate of Ben Allen. The thunder of the hoofs of the stampeded herd was dying away in the direction of the lower hills. The yells of the Indians had ceased to ring out, yet Phil knew that the pursuit of the ponies would not be discontinued readily. In fact, he was sure that some of the Indians would continue the search until the last one was found and returned to the village.

Phil became even more distressed as the time passed, and he thought of what might have happened to Ben. He wanted to leave the hills immediately and hurry on to the Waiilatpu mission, for he felt that he had news of importance for Marcus Whitman; yet he could not depart without first discovering if any mishap had befallen his comrade. If Ben were in danger or trouble, it was his duty to assist him.

"He may have been captured," was one of the reflections that troubled Phil. "In that case it will go hard with him. The temper of these Indians has reached the breaking point. They will be mad with rage when they discover that we drugged the guard,

and of course they will know that we stampeded the ponies. These things will give old Umtippi and Waskema just the arguments they've been wanting. I don't believe Stikine could stand up for us against them now."

Phil remained where he was until the moon rose and began to brighten the hills. There was an advantage in the clearing away of the darkness which had sheltered him. He could see which way to go. Therefore, he left the thicket and rode slowly back over the route he had come, realizing as he went on how mad had been that wild flight in the midst of the stampeded ponies, and how terrible his peril. He had not felt the danger then as now. The ground was very broken, filled with rocks, and gullied here and there, and it seemed a miracle that the pony had not broken either its neck or his own.

Phil seemed to have the instinct of an Indian. The many years he had spent in the trapping grounds of the mountains and in Indian lodges had quickened certain of his faculties—those faculties which usually fail the ordinary civilized man through disuse. As he rode on, he saw everything that could possibly be revealed by the white light of the moon. He heard every sound of the hills. From afar off came the long-drawn howl of a wolf. Nearer at hand some small

animal of the night gave tongue in chase. Nocturnal insects scraped and buzzed. Across the night sky overhead a bird passed occasionally with whistling beat of wing. With the exception of these sounds, a great stillness lay on the hills; yet Phil Curtis was not afraid, nor was he lonesome. His thoughts were of Ben Allen, of Marcus Whitman, and of the dancing and howling Cayuses in the village.

A long time was required to cover the ground which had been passed over so quickly, and the moon was riding high in the sky when Phil neared the lodges of Stikine. As he approached them he again heard the booming of drums in the council house.

"They're still at it, and may keep at it all night. The Indian mind is a strange thing. Instead of going about a matter as a white man would, it seems necessary for an Indian to work himself up to a certain pitch of excitement; so he drums and howls and dances, boasts of what he has done and what he intends to do, and by and by, when he feels brave enough or furious enough, he is ready to rush out and do the thing he wants to, or go upon the war-path, if that is what has been in his mind. War-path business is what is in the minds of these Indians, in my opinion."

Phil knew that the herd had not been recovered;

yet he found, when he drew near to the old herding ground, that some of the ponies had been brought back. He was now in a quandary. He wanted to leave his pony and creep into the village, to find out if Ben Allen was held there as a prisoner; but he had neither rope nor halter.

Native ingenuity came to his aid. Alighting he stripped several long pieces of flexible bark from a tree, and uniting these with some twisted withes he contrived to make a halter that would answer. With this he tethered the pony in what seemed to be a secure place. Then he began his attempt to get nearer to the lodges.

Phil was well aware that this effort would be attended by a good deal of danger, yet he felt he could not leave the hills without knowing certainly what had become of Ben Allen. Taking advantage of every bit of broken ground, of every shadow and rock, he crept forward, crawling and sliding along as if he were the veriest wolf of the Blue Mountains.

It was difficult and delicate work, yet not so difficult and delicate to him as it would have been to one unaccustomed to it. This was not the first time he had crept forward upon possible enemies; and he had slipped in that way on even the wildest of the game animals of the hills. Every twig that might snap and

betray his presence, he removed carefully before he went on. Now and then he stopped and lay flat, almost holding his breath as he listened.

In this manner, exercising infinite patience and perseverance, Phil Curtis drew near to the lodges, and by and by crept among them, crawling up to the very wall of the council lodge itself. He could tell from the sounds within that it was crowded with Cayuses. Waskema was there, for he could hear her croaking voice. Old Umtippi was also in the lodge, and was, at the moment, addressing the assembled Indians. The murmurs of applause, of vindictive fury, and of fiery hatred against the whites, which reached Phil, showed very clearly the present temper of these members of Stikine's band.

Phil listened most for some word which would tell him of Ben Allen. When he had lain there a long time and heard nothing, he began to feel certain that Ben was still somewhere in the hills; that the Indians had not overtaken him, and that, for the present, at least, he was safe. A little later a statement of Umtippi made him sure of this.

The old medicine man referred to the escape of the boys who had been virtually held as prisoners, and of the finding of the drugged guard.

"Putting the guard to sleep was a part of the

witchcraft which was hidden in those bottles," said Umtippi.

He recalled to the Cayuses the fact that he had warned them against the spirits imprisoned in those bottles. Those spirits had been put there, he said, by Doct' Whit'n, who professed to be a friend of the Cayuses, but who was in reality their enemy. Doct' Whit'n had sent these boys to Stikine's village that they might there loose the spirits in the bottles and destroy the Cayuses.

As old Umtippi went on making his statements, and uttering his fiery denunciations, the mystery of why Phil and Ben Allen had been seized and held so long as prisoners without being injured, was cleared away. Because Phil Curtis was the adopted son of Tilskit, the Indians would not raise their hands against him. Nevertheless, they had detained him and his companion to keep them from going to other villages and scattering the spirits, which the Indians believed they had brought with them. Those were evil spirits, bad spirits, spirits of disease and death — spirits which the medicine man, Umtippi, had combated with all his power.

Phil could hear him telling how he had fought against these bad spirits. Sometimes he had conquered, he said, and at other times he had failed. When he had failed, the bad spirits had been more powerful than he, and had dragged the sick down to their death.

Then Phil learned that but a few minutes before a woman sick of measles had died. Umtippi told how he had tried to save her; but he claimed he could not, for the evil spirits which had helped the white prisoners to escape, which had aided them in putting a deep sleep on the guard, had thwarted his efforts. The woman had died, and she had been slain, he declared, by the spirits which had assisted the prisoners.

Old Stikine, though he was superstitious, so much so that he believed many of the things said by Umtippi, attempted to voice a feeble protest. He still had faith in Marcus Whitman, and he had the courage to say so; yet he acknowledged that the bringing of those bottles into the village was a queer thing, and not to be accounted for. He could but admit that the woman had died, that the guard had fallen into a very strange sleep, from which he could not be aroused, and that the prisoners had escaped; yet he told the Cayuses they should not be hasty, nor hurry to redden their hands in the white men's blood.

That last sentence thrilled Phil Curtis to his fingertips. It assured him beyond peradventure that the Cayuses gathered in the medicine lodge were discussing the question of moving at once against the white men in the valley settlements.

As the talk went on, with first one warrior and then

another giving expression to his opinions, Phil learned further that nearly all of the Cayuse bands were in a wild ferment; and that not only were the Cayuses thrilled with a feeling of enmity against the whites, but hostility had risen in the hearts of the Nez Percés and other Oregon tribes.

For nearly an hour Phil Curtis lay with his face on the ground, listening to the talk in the council lodge. The moon was almost midway in the sky before he crept away. He was forced to move with exceeding stealth now, and he progressed so slowly and painfully that any one watching him would have doubted that he moved at all. Whenever he saw an Indian walking among the lodges, or a dog come sniffing in his direction, he lay as still as if he were one of the shadows that spotted the ground. When the danger was past, he crawled on again, quietly and cautiously.

By and by, when he was at some distance from the medicine lodge, and on the very outskirts of the village, he crept along with greater speed; but not until he was well beyond the last lodge did he venture to rise to his feet and walk with quick footsteps in the direction of his pony.

"I'm glad I went back," was his thought. "I know now just what the Indians are planning, and I know that Ben is not there. I hope he has struck for the

lower hills. If he has, he will get away. If he has gone in the other direction, he will be captured. I will look for him in the morning."

Phil used as much care in riding away from the village as he had in approaching it. When he had put several miles behind him he stopped, dismounted, tied the pony, and remained there until morning. With the first streakings of light he began his search for Ben Allen.

When the forenoon was pretty well spent, he came upon an Indian boy, and while still some distance away heard him singing, or mumbling, in a queer way. Dismounting and leaving his pony behind him, Phil slipped forward. The boy was standing at the foot of a small tree in a ravine, and seemed to be talking to the air. He was looking upward, but there was nothing in the tree.

Familiar as he was with the customs of these Indians, Phil knew immediately what this meant. It was the working out of one of the Cayuse superstitions. The tribe believed that all beasts, birds, reptiles, and fishes were once races of men, and that these creatures possessed the power to enter into men, and to talk to them, for the purpose of controlling and directing them. Every Cayuse boy was required, when he reached a certain age, to go alone into the mountains,

and remain there for several days without food, in order that he might be addressed by some animal, reptile, bird, or fish.

If the boy were worthy, if he fasted long and strenuously, it was believed that he would hear a voice speaking to him. This voice would tell him what his future was to be, and in what way he could secure honor and long life. It would tell him how he might become invulnerable, and what he should do if wounded, that he might recover quickly.

Some of the Cayuse boys returned without hearing any mysterious voice or receiving any assurances. Others, when they came back, told what they had heard,—what beast or bird, what reptile or fish, had spoken to them. Still others professed great secrecy, and would not reveal the wonderful things they had seen and listened to.

This belief and practice of the Cayuses, as Phil knew, was the foundation of the system of sorcery practised by the medicine men. The bird or beast which talked with the boy ever after aided him in warding off evil spirits and the spells which enemies might try to cast upon him.

After listening for a time to the words of the boy, who seemed to be addressing the empty air, Phil Curtis rose from behind the rock where he had con-

cealed himself and spoke to the young Cayuse. The latter started, and whirled round with staring eyes and open mouth. He had been fancying, or trying to fancy, that he heard a voice in the air. Now he heard a real voice, and its tones frightened him. When he beheld Phil, he seemed on the point of running away.

"Stop!" said Phil. "Are you not Neski, the nephew of Stikine?"

The boy stared, wondering. He was in so strange a mental state that he was willing and ready to believe anything. He would not have been surprised if told that Phil had dropped down behind that rock from the sky.

"Yes, I am the nephew of Stikine; I am Neski."

"Have you seen another white boy around here?" Phil asked. "There were two white boys in the village, you remember,—myself and another."

"I have seen no white boy," said Neski. "I have seen no one for two days. All that long time I have been here, fasting and talking to the spirits. I thought I heard a voice. I thought it was the voice of the bird that builds its nest in the tops of the tall redwoods down by the sea. It was telling me to be brave, and that I should become a great warrior. Then I heard your voice. Now I do not hear the other voice at all."

Phil Curtis felt a deep sense of pity for Neski. The Indian boy was so sincere in his superstition, that Phil could not doubt he believed he had heard a mysterious voice coming down from the sky. It is so easy to believe strange things when we are in the proper mental state.

"Neski," said Phil, "your people are thinking black thoughts against the white men. You have not been there for two days, and you do not know all that I know. The voice you heard told you to be brave. A brave man does not injure any one without need. The white boy who was with me in the lodge in Stikine's village is somewhere about here. If you should see him, tell him that I go at once to the mission at Waiilatpu; and tell him, too, that he should ride toward the mission without delay. It is in that direction."

Phil pointed far off across the hills.

"You are the friend of Stikine," said the young Cayuse, "and if I see the boy I shall tell him. I shall tell him because you are the friend of Stikine. Now, if you will go away, I will again try to hear the voice of the bird that builds its nest in the tops of the tall redwoods down by the sea."

Phil Curtis rode off in the direction he had indicated.

"Ben was not captured, that is sure; and as he is a pretty sensible fellow and had a good pony, I think it

is safe to say that he will try to get back to the mission without my aid. The only thing I am afraid of is that he is hunting for me somewhere in these hills. But I don't think I ought to stay here any longer. I must go on to the mission. The news that I have for Doctor Whitman is urgent and important."

So Phil Curtis rode away, watching carefully as he passed on, that he might not fall into the hands of any body of Cayuses who were out in search of the scattered ponies.

CHAPTER XVIII

STARTLING NEWS

IT was mid-afternoon before Phil found himself well out of the hills and approaching the more level country that stretched on toward Waiilatpu. He had maintained his native caution, keeping always to the lower ground and seeking such concealment as he could find for himself and his pony. He had seen no Indians, though once or twice he had fancied he heard them calling to each other in the distance. But now before him he beheld a thin column of smoke mounting into the air, indicating, as he believed, an Indian camp-fire.

“Perhaps I had better investigate that fire before I go on,” was his thought.

Therefore, he slipped from his pony, tying it as securely as he could with the lariat he had manufactured of bark and withes. Then he crept in the direction of the column of smoke, taking advantage of every inequality of surface and of every intervening rock to conceal his approach. His astonishment was

great, as he thus advanced, when a head was lifted, and he saw Ben Allen stand erect in the open.

"He's a fine woodsman," was Phil's sarcastic comment. "He doesn't know enough to come in when it rains."

Yet Phil Curtis liked and admired Ben Allen. He was only alarmed and disturbed by Ben's apparent recklessness. He was about to step out and reveal himself, when a humorous thought came to him.

"I will give him a scare; he deserves it."

Then, instead of advancing openly, he moved on as cautiously as if he were approaching a hostile encampment. He found not the least trouble in thus creeping on the unsuspecting youth. After staring about a while, Ben Allen dropped down by the side of his fire, seeming to feel that inasmuch as he was now well out of the hills he was safe. Just beyond him, in the depression, his pony, tied with the rawhide lariat, was grazing peacefully. Ben was apparently feeling very much at home. This was more in appearance, however, than in reality, for he had been greatly distressed about Phil, and was still very much worried.

When Phil had crawled to within a dozen yards of Ben, he picked up a small stone and hurled it with such accuracy that it struck in the midst of the fire, scattering the ashes and embers in every direction. That

stone, and its explosive effect, startled Ben Allen half out of his wits. He leaped to his feet with a cry of fright and seemed on the point of dashing away. Then he stared about, while his mouth dropped open and his eyes rolled in fright.

Phil Curtis rose into view, laughing heartily.

"Serves you right," he said, and he advanced toward the fire. "If I had been a hostile Indian, I could have slipped in on you and had your scalp without the least trouble."

Ben's face flushed scarlet.

"You scared me out of my wits," he confessed. "Was that a rock you threw? I didn't know what it was, or where it came from; but I'm mighty glad to see you. I was afraid the Indians had captured you." Then, regaining his mental equilibrium, he began to laugh too, though his flushed face still showed how confused he was and how sheepish he felt.

"I'm awfully glad to see you, Ben," said Phil. "I was as much worried about you as you could possibly have been about me. I even slipped back into the village to find out if they had made a prisoner of you. You were not there, and then I began to fear that you might have ridden in the wrong direction, deeper into the hills; but you're all right. How have you got along?"

Ben Allen's story was short and soon told. He

had wandered about, without knowing where to go, though he had judgment enough to seek the lower ground all the time, for he knew that would lead him by and by out of the hill country.

"But how did you build a fire?" Phil asked.

"I didn't; it was already built. I just found it here. It was nearly out, and I stirred it up again. I didn't like that cold meat I've been gnawing on, and I thought I could roast it or warm it a little on the coals, so that it would taste better."

Phil Curtis looked about very carefully, and then began to walk slowly round the fire in an ever-widening circle.

"What are you doing?" Ben inquired.

His companion came back to the fire, as he made answer:—

"I'm very certain this fire was built by Cayuses; very likely by a party out looking for those ponies. It may have been another party, though, belonging to some other Cayuse band."

"What makes you think they were Cayuses?"

"It's partly guesswork. There are moccasin tracks over there, in that softer ground. That shows they were Indians. It's not likely there are any Indians about here except Cayuses. That is why I said they were Cayuses."

"Oh," said Ben, "it's simple enough after all! It made me wonder how you knew."

Phil Curtis was not satisfied with the survey made in the vicinity of the camp-fire. After bringing up his pony, he went to the top of the nearest hill and from that point scrutinized the surrounding country carefully. Not a living thing was in sight.

"Ben," he said, speaking very sternly, as he returned, "if you should ever be out in the hills like this again, with Indians prowling round, let me warn you now never to build a fire, unless you have to! The way I knew you were here was because I saw your smoke. A band of Indians might have seen it in just the same way. They could have crept on you as easily as I did. Then, if they had been hostile, it wouldn't have been pleasant for you."

Phil had already scattered the camp-fire, so that the telltale smoke no longer rose into the air.

"We had better go on now," he said, "if you feel all right and are rested. I am worried about Doctor Whitman."

"Oh, I'm all right," Ben asserted, and he hastened to get his pony. "I wish I had a saddle, though. I never did like to ride bareback. One of the things I didn't like about the farm work back in Indianny was that I had to ride my plough horse bareback to the corn-field."

"You could have walked," said Phil, laughing.

"Yes, I could have walked; but I was too lazy to walk, and it made me tired to ride. But where do we head for now? The mission?"

"Yes, the mission. We want to get there as soon as we can."

Phil Curtis took the lead; and though, so far as he could ascertain, no Indians were near, he tried to exercise due caution, and impressed the necessity of caution upon Ben.

"I think I was safe enough back there," the latter insisted, when the camp-fire had been left behind. "Lightning doesn't strike twice in the same spot, they say; and for the same reason Indians wouldn't come twice to the same place, I suppose."

"Eh, what's that?" cried Phil.

He drew in suddenly on the mane of his pony. "Follow me down this hill," he said. "There's some one coming."

They turned aside, and had scarcely secreted themselves when a young Indian came into view. He was running at a swift Indian lope.

"Why, it's Timuitti!" was Phil's exclamation.

Then he rode out boldly and shouted to the young Indian.

Timuitti stopped, as if he heard a voice from the

sky. Seeing the two boys before him he came up to where they sat awaiting him on their ponies. His eyes had a strange, wild look, and he appeared to be greatly excited. Phil saw that he had been running a long distance.

"What's up, Timuitti?" Phil asked.

"Dead!" said Timuitti, rolling his eyes.

"Dead?" Phil questioned, filled with a sudden sense of impending ill.

"It was not Cayuse fault," said Timuitti. "It was fault of the half-breed, Joe Lewis."

"What's happened, Timuitti? Who's dead?" Phil demanded. "Speak up and tell me who is dead."

"Doct' Whit'n dead," he said. "Everybody dead—but it was not the fault of the Cayuses."

The heart of Phil Curtis seemed to rise in his throat and choke him. He felt the tears spring to his eyes, and his sight blurred. Ben Allen was equally startled and affected.

"There must be some mistake about this, Timuitti," said Phil, unwilling to believe what he had heard. "Tell me about it. What makes you think that Doctor Whitman is dead?"

"Me there," said Timuitti, in a tone to drive away all doubt. "Me there the day before, with my father, Tilskit. My father, Tilskit, say to Doct' Whit'n that

the Cayuses have black hearts against him ; and he tell Doct' Whit'n better go away some place until the Cayuses get good hearts again. Doct' Whit'n say he no go away. He say the Cayuses his people, that he love the Cayuses and would do them good ; that the Cayuses need him. He say he no go away."

Timuitti stopped, hesitating. The whole black tragedy was rising before the imagination of Phil Curtis.

"And what then, Timuitti?"

"That half-breed come — Joe Lewis."

"And there were Cayuses with him?"

"Yes, many Cayuses — Cayuses with black hearts. And they kill Doct' Whit'n, and Doct' Whit'n's wife, and a great many other people; and they take many other people away with them into the hills."

"Can you tell me about Cora Carlton — if she was killed, or carried away?"

Timuitti did not know.

Phil Curtis was fairly reeling on the back of his pony. The thing seemed impossible. He had long known that Doctor Whitman was in danger, but he had not let himself think too seriously about it. Looking round now, as if to get some hope or comfort from Ben Allen, he saw that Ben's face was streaming with tears.

"It's too terrible to be true," said Ben. "I can't believe it."

"Tell me everything you can about it, Timuitti, and give me the names of some of the Indians who were there."

Timuitti complied as well as he could. Among other names that he mentioned were those of certain members of Whitman's mission church. For these Indians, especially, Marcus Whitman had done everything that a man could do. For the half-breed renegade, who apparently had been the leader of the miscreants, Whitman had shown marked kindness. He had taken him into the mission when he had no home; he had given him food and clothing; he had assisted him in every possible way. Yet this was the reward.

"Me go on now," said Timuitti, turning his face toward the hills.

He was anxious to be away that he might convey the tidings to the village of Tilskit. Phil questioned him as to what had become of his father, and was assured by Timuitti that Tilskit had departed from the Waiilatpu mission many hours before the massacre. He believed that his father had gone to Walla Walla, but was not sure; but as for himself, he was hurrying to the village in the hills, and was anxious now to continue his journey.

Phil and Ben watched Timuitti as he climbed the slopes of the broken land, mounting with his long, easy

Indian lope, and disappearing finally. Then they rode on slowly, with flushed faces, discussing the terrible news.

"I ought to have left Stikine's village many days ago," said Phil. "Perhaps if I had, Doctor Whitman would have listened to me and gone away to some place where he would have been safe. He could have gone to Walla Walla, or down the Columbia to Fort Vancouver."

"He wouldn't have believed that he was in any danger," Ben Allen urged, anxious to relieve the distress of mind under which he saw that Phil was laboring.

"No, likely he wouldn't; but I should have felt better, if I had given him some warning. Doctor Whitman never understood Indians. Very few people can understand them who have not lived for a long while among them. I know that he has been told many times in the past year that his life was in danger; but he paid little attention when such things were said to him. More than once I have heard him laugh when some one spoke to him on the subject. He was so kind of heart himself that he looked only for kindness in other people."

"He was the best man I ever knew," said Ben Allen, and he said it with deep feeling.

"There's one thing that I have to be thankful for,"

Phil continued. "From what Timuitti said, no one from Stikine's village was mixed up in the thing. I don't think they knew that any movement had been definitely planned against the mission, even though they were booming their war drum last night and making speeches against the whites. If this had been done by Stikine's Indians, I don't think I could have ever forgiven myself for not getting away somehow and giving warning."

The news of the terrible massacre at the Waiilatpu mission made Phil Curtis and Ben Allen understand that they were now in no inconsiderable danger themselves. The story would run like wildfire among the Indians of Oregon. It would probably cause an uprising. Wherever a white man was encountered, the Indians would consider him an enemy and show him no mercy.

They were soon given confirmation of the news brought by Timuitti, and further details concerning the terrible tragedy at Waiilatpu, by Tom McKay, whom they encountered in the open plain. McKay was accompanied by half a dozen mountain men, who had ridden at hot speed from Walla Walla. Information of the massacre had already reached that place, and was being borne by boatmen down the Columbia to Fort Vancouver.

"Terrible news, lad!" said McKay, when he had struck hands with the two in greeting. "Ye have heard it?"

"My Indian brother, Timuitti, told us all he could about it."

"It was terrible, terrible!" said McKay, and the mountain men echoed his declaration. "And as bad as anything is the news about the women."

"What of the women?" said Phil, thinking chiefly of Cora Carlton.

"Whitman and his wife were killed," said McKay; "but a great many girls and women were carried away by the Indians — about forty all together, I'm told. It was the work of the Cayuses. They got away before daylight with all their prisoners, and are now in the hills. Ay, lad, they knew they would be followed, and they will be followed!"

"Have you been to the mission?" asked Phil.

His chief thought was still of Cora Carlton. If she were a prisoner, she might be rescued. He determined to cling to that hope and to cherish it as long as he could.

"I am going on there," said McKay. "Will ye ride with us, lad? But some of us are going back to Walla Walla at once."

Phil sat on his pony in hesitation. A certain sicken-

ing sense made him feel that he could not bear to look on the wreck and ruin at Waiilatpu.

"I will ride to Walla Walla," he answered. "We need guns and ammunition, Ben and I. Then we will help you to arouse the country. Do you know where my father is?"

"He was at Walla Walla when we left. Boy, I tell you the news almost killed him outright, for he thought that ye had been at Waiilatpu. But there were those at Walla Walla who knew that Whitman had sent ye into the Cayuse villages to play medicine man. Your father was to ride down the river and carry the news to the settlers in that direction, when we came away."

"We will ride to Walla Walla," said Phil. "We must get supplies, and I wish to see my father."

He looked earnestly at Tom McKay and the other mountain men.

"Do you think there will be a war?"

"There will be a war against the Cayuses," said McKay. "Messengers have gone to Vancouver. I wish McLoughlin was still chief factor, though Peter Skeen Ogden is a good man."

He looked at Phil almost fiercely.

"Lad, if any one ever says to ye that the White-headed Eagle of the Columbia was in favor of such work as that over there at Waiilatpu, tell him to his

teeth that he lies. Many things have been said against old John McLoughlin ; but he is a man, and always has been, every inch of him. He was a Hudson Bay man, and did not like the coming of the Americans ; but there is brave Scotch blood in his veins, and never any deceit in his heart ; and he treated the Americans kindly, and lost his place because of it."

Phil Curtis could agree with everything that Tom McKay said in favor of Doctor John McLoughlin. He knew—for the news had gone far and wide—that McLoughlin, in the goodness of his heart, had done so many things for the needy Americans along the Columbia that dissatisfaction had arisen against him at the headquarters of the Hudson Bay Company in London, and he had been displaced. The Company did not look kindly on the American settlers. It wished Oregon to be all British—to remain as it was, a land of Indians and fur-bearing animals, which could be made to turn large profits into its own coffers.

Tom McKay and a few of the mountain men rode on to the mission at Waiilatpu. The other mountaineers turned back toward Walla Walla, accompanied by Phil Curtis and Ben Allen, whose hearts were now shadowed by a great grief. Phil had mourned for Elijah, slain in California ; but his sorrow over the death of Elijah was as nothing compared with that which he felt now.

CHAPTER XIX

CORA CARLTON

CORA CARLTON had not entirely approved Doctor Whitman's action in sending Phil Curtis and Ben Allen among the Cayuses, and ever since their departure she had been somewhat uneasy concerning their safety.

She was a natural teacher, and had the missionary spirit. Therefore, she had made herself an invaluable assistant to Mrs. Whitman. She loved her work, and rejoiced to see the rapid advances in education made by her copper-skinned pupils. She had thought that they loved her in return, and that they had a desire to learn the many things which the white men knew. The older Indians had often spoken in terms of praise and approval of her work, and declared their satisfaction in seeing the younger Indians enter upon the white man's way.

Recently, however, she had begun to doubt and to question. There was a growing spirit of restlessness in the young Indians who attended the school at the Waiilatpu mission. This she attributed to the evil in-

fluences exerted on their minds by the inflammatory utterances of such men as Dorion and Delaware Tom, who had continually harangued the Cayuses in an effort to rouse them against the whites.

The actions and the words of her pupils when the panic broke out in the school because measles had invaded the tribes shocked and alarmed her. She began to see the Indian character in a new light, and perceived that even those pupils who had seemed so tractable and quiet were still but half-wild savages filled with strange and deep superstition. One by one they left the school, with open abuse or veiled cunning; and the work she had loved, and to which she had given so much of her time and energy, seemed to be falling to pieces.

Long before that she had been distressed and made uneasy by the strange actions of Matpah. She had shivered and cringed when she knew that his burning eyes were fixed on her, yet she had not dared to order him from the schoolroom. Matpah was influential with these Indians, for he was the son of a chief, and it was expected that he would one day become a chief himself. Therefore, she had spoken kindly to him whenever it was necessary to speak at all, though she had avoided him as much as possible. But Matpah had persisted in following her about, in visiting the schoolroom, where

he was not wanted, and in speaking to her in a way that startled her.

After that unexpected combat between him and Phil Curtis, Matpah had disappeared entirely — a thing which gave Cora great relief; yet she continued to fear him and his influence. She heard of him now and then through Timuitti and others of her pupils. He was out in the hills somewhere, and seemed to have settled into quiet; but he had become the avowed enemy of Phil Curtis. This fact tended to augment her uneasiness, when Phil and Ben Allen remained so long in the hills and no word came from them.

Measles invaded the mission school itself, attacking two of the few Indian children who had remained faithful. All of the children then left the school, with the exception of these two, who could not get away. To them Cora Carlton devoted her time unselfishly, watching by their bedsides and caring for them with all the patience and skill of a trained nurse.

In the midst of these disquieting circumstances came many other things which tended to destroy her peace of mind. Among these were the visits which certain of the Cayuse chiefs made to the mission for the purpose of talking with Marcus Whitman. He was not there a great deal, for he was very busy attending to the needs of the sick in the scattered Cayuse villages; but when-

ever these chiefs chanced to meet him at the mission, their words concerned the danger that he was now in.

“The heart of the Indian is very bad against you,” said Tilskit, who was one of these visitors. “I like you, Doct’ Whit’n, and I think you good man. You better go away from here and stay a long time, until the heart of the Indian is good again. It is very black now — very black. I think you better go to Walla Walla, or down to Vancouver. Cayuses make very much bad talk now, and old Tilskit very much afraid for you.”

Spalding, who had charge of the mission at Lapwai, came down to Waiilatpu to consult with Marcus Whitman concerning the serious outlook. The Nez Percés were muttering and talking in much the same way as the Cayuses. Spalding feared an uprising of the Nez Percés. Measles had broken out in that tribe, and the medicine men were declaring that the whites were the cause of it.

It was on the occasion of this visit that Spalding and Whitman spoke of sending medicines to various places where Whitman had not been able to go; and it was this talk, no doubt, which the Indian boy heard, and which, in an exaggerated form, flew as a wild report among the Indians of Oregon.

Spalding took his departure the next day for Lapwai, and Whitman went forth again, to do what he could to

assist the distressed Indians in a near-by village. He had begun to feel that he was in danger, but he was not willing to desert what he considered his post of duty. He took with him almost the only medicines that remained, and instructed Mrs. Whitman to send to Walla Walla for another supply.

As there was no one at Waiilatpu who seemed sufficiently reliable to undertake this mission, Cora Carlton volunteered to go herself. Though the distance was forty miles, she was a courageous girl, and being an accomplished rider, and having a good horse, she was sure that she could ride there in one day and return in another. It was a trip to try the strength of the hardest man; but the girl heroine undertook it.

The journey to Walla Walla was made without misadventure. Pierre Pambrun was no longer the agent of the Hudson Bay Company at that post, and no longer did his daughter, Maria, ride out over the crisp bunch grass, or listen to the song of the boatmen.

Nevertheless, there were kind hearts at Walla Walla, and the agent and his wife listened with interest and attention to Cora's story, and gave her shelter and hospitality for the night. They were troubled, as John McLoughlin had been long before, by the distresses of the Indians and the danger of the whites.

Cora Carlton felt sufficiently rested to undertake the

return journey the next morning; so she set out with the medicine which had been given her. Having accomplished the greater part of her trip without mishap, she was filled with sudden dismay and fear when she beheld a band of Indians ride into view in a hollow below her and then disappear from sight. She would not have been so frightened if they had come straight on, but their evident attempt at concealment was not reassuring.

Pulling her pony out of the trail, she began to ride in a *détour*. Her pony was fast, and if she could pass them she felt that he would be able to show them a clean pair of heels in a race for the mission. But as she was picking her way over some rough ground she came face to face with two Indians, who rose up from behind a rock and confronted her. One of them was Matpah.

He looked into her face with an evil leer and caught her pony's bridle. For a moment Cora Carlton felt as if she would faint and fall from the saddle. Matpah and his companion were in war-paint. Ordinarily he was attractive, as Indians go, but now he looked fierce and horrible.

"You marry Matpah now!" he said, catching her by the wrist. "Matpah chief now! Doct' Whit'n dead. All dead at mission. Phil Curtis dead out in hills."

The news startled and terrified Cora Carlton. Nevertheless, she tried to regain her courage, and to tell this sneering young chief that she did not believe his report.

"Let me go!" she begged. "I was always kind to you down at the mission, and now you must let me go. Mrs. Whitman will be waiting for me. And there are Cayuses there whom I must help. I have medicines here that they need."

The other Indians, who had been in hiding, were galloping up, and she saw them surrounding her.

"Doct' Whit'n's medicine kill Indian," declared Matpah, fiercely. "Bad spirits in medicine bottles. They make Indian sick; they make him die. But Doct' Whit'n dead now; Doct' Whit'n's wife dead. You no go to the mission!"

The mounted Indians surrounded her more closely. She looked appealingly from one painted face to another, but saw nothing to give her hope.

"It is not so; it can't be so! Doctor Whitman is not dead! You Cayuses would not kill so good a man as Doctor Whitman!"

"Doct' Whit'n dead!" repeated Matpah. "Now you go with me."

He pointed toward the distant hills.

"Oh, Phil! Phil!" was her cry.

She did not believe that Phil Curtis was dead, and she could not bring herself to believe in the death of Marcus Whitman, though what she heard a little later convinced her that this part of the story, at least, was all too true. Proof was given, when a number of women and girls were brought up by the Indians, and she saw among them some of the white girls from the mission.

"Yes, Doctor Whitman is dead," they told her. "He was murdered by the Cayuses. Matpah was one of the leaders, and Joe Lewis was another."

The shock, when she knew for a truth that the brave missionary had fallen at his post of duty, made her very brain reel; yet she felt that she herself had now a new duty to perform. Whatever terrible thing the future had in store for her, she could at least try to comfort these weeping women and girls. If she could do no more, she could say a few words that might cheer them and make their burden less heavy.

Phil Curtis had not been at the mission, she knew; and deep down in her heart was a hope that he had escaped.

"Oh, Phil! Phil!" was her unuttered cry.

CHAPTER XX

MATPAH'S DEFIANCE

THAT cry of Cora Carlton seemed to reach across the distance to Phil Curtis. Tom McKay and the mountain men had informed him that most of the women and children at the mission had been carried away into captivity. This was a terrible fate, he knew; but it was better than death, for it held out hope.

Among the things which Tom McKay had told him, and which the mountaineers repeated, was that news of the massacre had been carried to the legislature, then in session at Oregon City, and that the governor had issued a call for troops. The stern border men were already assembling, and McKay and his companions had been riding over the country for the purpose of rallying others.

"It's too bad, lad, that it is the beginning of winter," McKay had said. "But for that we could get help from California. No one could carry the news now over the Sierras."

Riflemen were gathering at Fort Walla Walla, when Phil Curtis and Ben Allen, with the mountain men, reached that place. That night John Curtis arrived, bringing with him a number of the settlers of the Walla Walla valley. Much wild war talk was in the air. Other riflemen were coming, it was reported, and soon there would be a sufficient force to give battle to the united bands of the Cayuses and Nez Percés.

The impatience of Phil Curtis outran all the plans of the others. His thoughts were of Cora Carlton and those women and girls carried into captivity. So he talked to some of the younger men. They did not agree with him, that it was the part of wisdom for a small force to push on in advance. They believed, with John Curtis and others, that it would be better to wait until a sufficient number of riflemen had massed at Walla Walla.

"I am going into the mountains again," said Phil, announcing his intention to Ben Allen. "I'm not afraid to go, because I am a Cayuse myself, by adoption. I can't ask you to go with me, though I should like your company."

Ben Allen looked at him in amazement.

"Do you mean it?" he questioned.

"I certainly do. A day may mean a great deal. What I can do I don't know, but I feel that I can do

something. I can rely on old Tilskit and on Pio-pio-mox-mox, and there are other Cayuses who will help me. If I can't do anything else, I can find out where the prisoners are, and go to them and save them from as much insult and cruelty as possible."

If Ben Allen had been wiser in the ways of Indians and had admired Phil Curtis less, he might have given a different answer. As it was, he declared in his enthusiasm that if Phil could go again into the villages, he could accompany him.

Nevertheless, Phil did not start out without consulting his father. He explained the condition of things as he saw it, and told him what he hoped to accomplish. John Curtis hesitated.

"Lad, I admire your bravery, but I can't say that I think any too much of your discretion. It may be safe for you, though; so I will not say that you shan't go." It was as much of a consent as Phil expected to get.

John Curtis was well known at Walla Walla; hence it was easy for him to secure for Phil and Ben two good rifles, a plentiful supply of ammunition, and such food as they could carry. He also obtained for them proper accoutrements for their ponies, for they had ridden into Walla Walla without saddles or bridles.

Thus fitted out, Phil and Ben rode out from the post of Walla Walla at the break of day, and headed their

ponies toward the hills, where the snows were already lying.

Phil's first objective point was the village of Tilskit. When he reached it, he found to his delight that Pio-pio-mox-mox was there. The old chief was still in sore sorrow over the death of Elijah. He looked away when Phil spoke to him.

"My heart is not good toward the white man any more," he declared sadly. "I have long been the friend of the white man. I was the friend of Doct' Whit'n; but Doct' Whit'n is dead now. I did not kill him. I did not know that he was to be killed. If I could have done so, I would have saved him, for Doct' Whit'n was a good man. Yet Elijah is dead, and the white man killed him! So my heart does not feel right toward the white man."

Phil and Ben stopped in the lodge of Tilskit, where they were greeted warmly by old Neekomy and by Timuitti. Neekomy declared that she was glad to behold her son, whom she had not seen for a long time. Tilskit and Neekomy, in answer to Phil's questions, told what they could of the captives. They had heard of the raid on the mission, of the death of Marcus Whitman, and the carrying away of the women and girls.

"Some of them are beyond here, in the village of

Matpah, on the edge of the Blue Mountains," said old Tilskit. "Matpah is chief now, and you will do well if you do not go there. It will not be safe."

Phil begged that Tilskit would accompany him, and take with him a number of his most influential men. He told Tilskit that if he and some of his chief men would go to Matpah, and point out to him the folly of his course, it might have a good effect on that rash young warrior.

"I want you to go with me and tell Matpah that the white men are arming at Walla Walla and by the Columbia. They are gathering there by dozens and scores. They are coming with their long-shooting guns. There is anger in their hearts because of the thing that has been done at Waiilatpu. Matpah will be punished for that thing. If you will tell him so, he may believe you, when he would not believe me."

He made this appeal also to old Pio-pio-mox-mox. Both Tilskit and the Yellow Serpent shook their heads sorrowfully. They could not, or they would not, interfere with another chief of another band. They claimed that they did not sympathize with Matpah, nor with any of the chiefs who had allied themselves with him. Yet they would not hearken to Phil's pleading.

Somewhat to Phil's surprise, Matpah himself appeared in Tilskit's village before this interview had

ended. He was in war-paint and feathers, and was accompanied by three members of his band. He had come there for the purpose of drawing Tilskit into the war which the Cayuses now proposed to wage against the white men. His eyes flashed with anger when he saw Phil.

"Boston spoke many big words down at the Waiilatpu mission," he said, as he stood before Phil in all the glory of his war toggery. "Now it is the turn of Matpah! The young Boston was a fool to come up here. He has placed himself in the hands of the Cayuses. Does he not know that many white men have been killed, and that many prisoners have been taken?"

The anger of Phil Curtis burst into a flame.

"I know that you are a scoundrel and a murderer," he declared, as he stood unflinchingly before the feathered and painted chief; "and I know, too, that you will live to see the day when you will regret what you have done!"

Matpah reached forward as if he would smite Phil in the face, but Tilskit interfered.

"He is my son!" he said sternly. "Long ago he saved the life of Timuitti, and because of that he has become my son, in place of the son who was lost in the big river. He is here in my lodge. You will not strike him. He is the white Cayuse."

Ben Allen had sufficient discretion to remain silent throughout this wordy encounter.

"Do you know that riflemen are gathering at Walla Walla and all along the Columbia River?" said Phil, speaking directly to Matpah the words he had wished Tilskit and Pio-pio-mox-mox to carry to him.

"Pah!" sniffed the haughty young chief. "The Cayuses and the Nez Percés are thick as the leaves of the forest. What can the white men do? Our medicine men will make their guns harmless—their long-shooting guns shall be like reeds by the river. The medicine drums are booming even now. If your ears were larger, you could hear them."

"Matpah," said Phil, his anger breaking out again, "you have been among the white people enough to know how foolish such ideas are. If you trust in the power of the medicine men, and believe that the Indians can win because they outnumber the whites, the time will come when you will be sorry for it. You have killed Marcus Whitman! That cannot be undone; but you can send back those women and girls, and if you do that the anger of the white men may not burn so hot against you."

"Pah!" said Matpah, spitting out his exclamation as if his emotions choked him, "the Boston boy talks big;

but if he thinks that Matpah and the Cayuses with him are cowards, let him lead on the white men."

Nothing was to be gained by this angry discussion, as Phil soon saw. It only increased the stubbornness of the young chief. By and by Matpah went away, and Phil observed him talking with some of the head men of Tilskit's village.

"When he leaves the village, we will follow," he said to Ben Allen. "Just where his village is I don't know, and these Indians don't know or will not tell me. That is a thing we must find out by following him."

"I can see that we shall get ourselves into trouble, and a whole lot of trouble," was the statement of Ben Allen; "but I have come so far with you, and if you will go on I will go too."

In the firm determination to move out of the village after Matpah when he departed, Phil tried to keep an eye on him so long as he remained. Yet, before he knew it, Matpah had disappeared, and he had not seen him go.

CHAPTER XXI

PHIL'S COURAGEOUS WORK

AFTER the departure of Matpah, Phil had an earnest consultation with old Tilskit. The chief had been in a wavering mood, and his mental attitude was still unsettled. His Cayuse sympathies were naturally with his people. Yet he had liked Marcus Whitman, and could not approve of the massacre and the carrying away of the women and girls into the hills. He stated as much to Phil. Timuitti sat by during the conversation, in which he now and then took a part.

“My son,” said the old chief, before the talk ended, addressing Phil, “I do not think it was wise for you to come again into the hills. It was very bad for you to bring that boy, for he does not understand the ways of the mountains nor the ways of the Indians. If you go on with him, he will get you into trouble.”

“But I must go on!” Phil insisted.

“It is bad, all bad,” Tilskit declared, referring to the general situation. “I do not know what you can do. The Cayuses are gathering about Matpah, and they will

fight. But if you will go on, I think that my son Timuitti should go with you; but you must do nothing rash."

When Phil acquainted Ben Allen with Tilskit's statements, Ben declared that he was willing to return.

"You can follow our trail back until you meet the mountain men," said Phil. "I think McKay is not more than a day behind us. You can tell him where I have gone, and hurry him on."

Old Tilskit approved of this. The Cayuse ponies, on which Phil and Ben had made their escape, and which they had ridden to Tilskit's village, were now exchanged for others. Phil had contemplated making this exchange when he left Walla Walla. Unpleasant consequences might follow, he knew, if while riding one of these ponies, he should fall into the hands of the Cayuses from Stikine's village. Even though Stikine's people had kept his pony and Ben's, they would undoubtedly accuse him of horse stealing, and that was a serious thing.

At daylight Ben Allen departed from the village, mounted on one of the ponies procured from Tilskit. As soon as he was gone Phil took Timuitti and they began a search for the trail which it was hoped Matpah had made in leaving. They found nothing, for the young warrior had been crafty. No one had seen him go, so far as Phil could ascertain, nor could his pony

tracks be discovered, though this last was not so strange when it is remembered that many ponies were kept in and about the village. However, Tilskit was able to give some helpful information, and he pointed out what he believed to be the direction Matpah had taken, and his probable destination.

Timuitti seemed glad to be able to help his white brother. The fright he had shown immediately after the massacre had passed away. He had loved Marcus Whitman as well, perhaps, as any Indian could love a white man. He had been in Whitman's school, and was a member of his church. The massacre had horrified him, and thrown him into a fever of fear. Cora Carlton, who was one of his teachers, he had liked very much, and he could not say things sufficiently bitter against Matpah. Yet Timuitti did not wholly approve of Phil's present course, because he doubted its wisdom and its success.

It must be confessed that Phil Curtis himself was not quite sure what he should be able to accomplish. He was simply driven on by a furious determination to do something. Thoughts of what the women and children might be suffering were a keen stimulus.

When Phil and Timuitti had ridden two or three miles in the cold, crisp air of the early morning, following the general direction indicated by old Tilskit, they came

upon the trail of a rather large band of Indians. There were many indications to show that these were Cayuses, and that they had stopped at that point for the purpose of a conference or consultation.

"Matpah meet 'em here," said Timuitti, voicing an opinion which Phil had already formed. "They come from way off there—see! He come from the village; here they meet. Now they go on together."

This broad trail of many Indians Phil and Timuitti followed carefully, watching lest they should run into an ambush. It seemed very likely that Matpah would fear pursuit; and in that case he might try to set a trap for his pursuers. Twice during the forenoon smaller trails were seen to join this larger one.

"The Cayuses are coming together," said Phil. "They are gathering a large force at some point."

"There be big fight by and by," was the opinion of Timuitti.

Following the trail patiently and cautiously throughout the forenoon they observed other evidences that the Cayuses were concentrating; and just before nightfall Phil discovered, from the top of a hill to which he climbed, a considerable village in the valley below. As he went back to Timuitti he hoped that Matpah and the prisoners were in that village.

Up to this time Phil had been as cool as a veteran.

Now he was undeniably nervous. He did not know what to do, nor what he could do. How could he aid the women and children, even if they were in the village?

"The first thing to find out, Timuitti, is if I am right. To do that I shall have to go into the village to-night."

Timuitti looked at him with shining eyes.

"I can crawl in, if you stay with the ponies," he suggested.

The thought of a task like that stirred the pulses of the Indian boy. Of such work he had often dreamed. His earliest recollections were mingled with fancies of the heroic things he should do in warfare against enemies. He had often planned how he would creep like a lizard upon some foe; how he would slip into the lodges of some tribe he would despoil; and even though the village which Phil had seen belonged to members of his own tribe, the Indian instinct for surprise—which has played so great a part in Indian warfare—moved within him, and sent the blood in hot waves through his veins.

"You could do it all right, Timuitti; I haven't a doubt of that," said Phil.

Timuitti's face showed his disappointment. He saw that Phil intended to go himself.

"Why am I not to go?" he questioned.

Phil did not wish to say he feared to trust the discretion of his Indian brother.

"I think it is better that I should go, Timuitti. I want to see just where the women and children are; how everything is, in fact. When I come back, I can tell you."

Phil knew it would not be safe to make his attempt until a rather late hour, so he and Timuitti concealed themselves and their ponies as well as they could, and lay in waiting. They had not made a fire since leaving Tilskit's village, and they knew they could not make one now. Therefore, they ate the cold meat they had brought with them, and forced themselves to be content with that.

The moon was rising when Phil Curtis began his preparations.

"You must turn me into a Cayuse," he said to Timuitti. "I shall want those feathers."

When leaving the village Timuitti had set forth in all the glory of Indian war gear. It would have been beneath his pride to go otherwise. Now, at Phil's bidding, he carefully set his long head feathers in Phil's hair. When this had been done Phil took from behind his saddle an old robe and drew it about his shoulders.

"It will do," he declared.

Then he slipped away in the direction of the village.

The silence in which it was wrapped had already been noted and commented on by himself and Timuitti. If this were a gathering of warriors who expected soon to meet the whites in battle array, drums would be sounding; but not a drum boomed, and the only thing he heard, as he drew near, was the talk of women and children.

Circling the village until he came to the small stream that ran through it, he crept into the shelter of the fantastic shadows cast by the lodges. He soon discovered that very few warriors were in the village, though there were many women and children.

"The prisoners are not here," was his conclusion, and he felt a sinking of the heart.

He was not willing to trust to this belief, however, and he continued his investigation. Once, when he walked from the shadow of one lodge to another, he was accosted in a sharp tone by an old woman who stood in an entrance. Phil answered in the Cayuse tongue, hoping to allay her suspicions.

"Who are you?" she persisted. "And where are you going?"

"Must a warrior answer a squaw, just because it pleases her to ask a question?" was the reply, given in a tone of anger. "I am seeking Matpah."

She came nearer and stared at him.

"Where have you been — asleep? Matpah is not here!"

"Yes, I have been asleep. He was here!"

"He has gone," said the woman.

"Where has he gone?"

"I cannot tell you. His trail lies over there. Those who came with him went with him. You were a fool not to know that!"

Phil Curtis was moving on. He did not wish to continue the conversation, or have the old hag come closer to him. Discovery would have been the ultimate result, and that would have been troublesome.

"I can get out of here all right, even if they do discover that I am not an Indian," was his thought; but he was not ready to get out.

He had feared to ask the squaw about the women and children who had been taken into the hills as prisoners. That would have aroused her suspicions. Therefore, he continued his search until he had circled the entire village. The prisoners were not there; that was certain; and as soon as he was sure of it he slipped out of the village as quietly as he had entered, and hurried off to join Timuitti.

He found the Indian lad in a state of much excitement.

"White men are coming!" was his announcement.

"How do you know, Timuitti?"

"I lie on the ground while you were gone; a good while I lie on the ground. Then I heard a tramp of horses away off there, and I heard the jingle of a bridle, and then talk in the voices of white men. It was all very low; and if I had not lain on the ground, I could not have heard it. Yet I know."

Phil Curtis dropped to the ground instantly, and lay with his ear pressed to the earth. At first he heard nothing. Then there was borne to him, as it were through the solid earth, a low "thud, thud," as of horses' hoofs striking. By and by he heard voices of white men and the clink of a gun or bridle.

"You are right, Timuitti," he said, leaping to his feet. "The white men are coming! Get your pony, and we will meet them."

He was now as much excited as Timuitti. He had not expected the party to arrive so soon. The ponies were brought up in haste, and Phil and Timuitti set off in the direction from which the sounds had seemed to come. When they had travelled some distance, they were brought to a sharp halt.

"Who goes there?" was the question they heard, with the click of a rifle lock.

"Friends," said Phil. "Whose party is this?"

"Tom McKay's," was the answer. "Who are you?"

"Let me see McKay at once. I am Phil Curtis, and this is Timuitti with me."

"We knew you were not far ahead, lad," said McKay, when Phil met him. "It's only because of what you did that we have come on so fast. I mean the word you left for us at Tilskit's village, and the word that Ben brought to us. After we struck the big trail we came on without trouble. What's ahead, lad; what's in the wind?"

Before Phil could answer, Ben Allen pushed forward.

"I'm here, you see," he said, "even though you did send me back."

Phil directed his answer to Tom McKay.

"There's an Indian village on the other side of that hill."

"Ay, lad, we knew that. I sighted it myself from the top of the peak yonder before sunset. If we can get near enough without being discovered, we intend to strike it just before daylight."

"I have been in that village," said Phil.

Then he began to tell McKay what he had seen and heard, as the men composing the command crowded round him in the darkness. He could see but few of them, and even those he could distinguish imperfectly; yet he heard now the voices of his father and of old Tilskit.

"Have you found where the women are?" John Curtis asked, stepping forward.

Phil could only tell his father that the women and children were not there. Then he related in detail how he had crept into the village, and what he had there seen and heard.

"It is good for me, I think, to go to that village," said Tilskit. "Many of the people there will know me. I will learn what has become of the prisoners."

Timuitti had been overjoyed to see his father. The feelings of Phil Curtis were those of surprise mingled with delight. He thought he understood why old Tilskit had come on with this party of Tom McKay's. The chief was anxious for the safety of his adopted son, the white Cayuse.

The party under McKay, Phil now learned, was but a small body of men, that had detached itself from the main force long before Tilskit's village was reached, and had pushed on with great rapidity.

Tom McKay had intended to approach as near as he could to the Indian village, and then to charge it in the wild border fashion. This his men would have done if they had not been stopped by Phil and Timuitti. It would have been a sad mistake, for the warriors were gone, and only old men, women, and children remained behind. Some of these would have been slain without

doubt, and the result would have been to increase the bitterness of the Indians against the whites.

After a talk the mountain men under McKay decided to remain where they were for the remainder of the night and to determine their future action somewhat upon the report which old Tilskit should bring on his return.

Tilskit came back within an hour. He had been in the village, and had talked with a number of the Indians there. Thinking it was unwise to tell them that a body of mountain men was near at hand, armed and threatening revenge for the capture of the prisoners and the massacre at the Wailatpu mission, he had merely claimed that he was passing near, and seeing the village had stopped to make some inquiries concerning certain chiefs whom he named. One of these chiefs was Matpah.

By his adroitness, and also because old Tilskit was not suspected of having designs against any Cayuses, he was able to secure a much greater amount of information than Phil Curtis had done. He found out the location of a village in which some of the prisoners were held, and also that Matpah and those with him were supposed to have gone on to that point, stopping only in this village for a short time.

He was told also that the Cayuses and the Nez

Percés were assembling in large numbers. Most of the chief men and warriors had declared, or were declaring, in favor of a war of extermination against the whites. They had come to believe with Dorion and the other malcontents, that there was no safety for any Indian of Oregon if the white settlers were allowed to come into the country and remain. Therefore, to the Indian mind, the only thing to do was to kill the white people.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CHIEF FACTOR'S MESSAGE

TOM McKAY'S men broke camp while the stars were yet shining, swung in a big circle round the village, and by the time the sun rose, were well on their way in the direction which Tilskit pointed out. They pursued hard and fast on the heels of Matpah and his Indians, and that afternoon came in sight of what was undoubtedly the village in which some at least of the prisoners were held. Here were many lodges and ponies, and warriors in considerable numbers.

When this village was discovered Tom McKay called a halt, and an earnest consultation followed. He was in favor of peaceable measures, if these could be used.

"I will go forward into the village myself," he said, "taking with me Tilskit and two or three others. I think our young friend, Phil Curtis, would be a good one to accompany us, for the Cayuses think well of

him. If we should make an attack, some of the captives would be killed."

"Ay, but be ready for an attack," said John Curtis, stoutly. "We will be ready for fighting, if fighting is to be."

John Curtis remained behind with the small body of mountain men and held them in readiness for instant action, whether that action should take the form of a defence against an attack, or should be an assault to rescue McKay and those who had gone on in advance.

Phil Curtis was not pleased on entering the village to discover old Waskema there. The whites had no more active and malignant enemy than this ubiquitous old squaw. Wherever there was discontent, she was present to increase it. She took fierce delight in fanning the fires of hate. Now she was here, when Phil had thought her far away in the village of Stikine.

The entrance of Tom McKay and his companions into the village threw her into a fury. As the thrill of excitement occasioned by their appearance ran from lodge to lodge, and the Indians began to gather, she drew herself up in front of Tom McKay and Phil Curtis, and pointing her finger at Phil began to denounce him bitterly.

"He calls himself the white Cayuse, and says that he loves the Indians; yet he it was that brought the

bottled spirits into the village of Stikine, causing the people to die. He it was that threw Taulicah into a deep sleep when he stood guard at the lodge entrance, — a sleep like unto death, — which would have been death but for the power of the medicine man, Umtippi; and now he comes here to cast his spells upon the Cayuses of this village.”

The bent form of the old hag quivered as she shook her finger in Phil's face and delivered her scathing denunciations.

Nevertheless, Tom McKay stood boldly before the old woman and the medicine men who had come up to support her by their presence.

“It's a lie!” he said, and he spoke in hot wrath. “But I have not come here to bandy words with Waskema or any one else.”

Tom McKay was a commanding figure, and his keen eyes seemed to flash fire as he looked round on the encircling Cayuses.

“I do not say that any one here has been guilty, but some one, — and they were Cayuses, — led on by that devil, Joe Lewis, killed Doctor Whitman and his wife and a great many other people, and have carried away many prisoners. Where those prisoners are we do not know, but we believe that some of them are right here.”

There were cries of denial and derision.

“Go!” said Waskema, pounding with her crooked stick. “The Cayuses know you, Tom McKay, and they do not want you! There are no prisoners here!”

“Hear ye!” cried McKay, speaking with unbending sternness. “Behind me, back there,” — he waved a hand in the direction of the force he had left, — “are mountain men. They have not come here to fight. I have not come here to fight; I came to talk with you, and talk with you I will. I will have my say. Ay, I will tell you to your teeth just what I think. Ye are fools, ye Cayuses! We are few here; but away on the Walla Walla, and on the Columbia, are many white men. Do you think they will sit quietly in their warm lodges, while the wind blows cold here in the hills and the snow threatens, if you hold as prisoners those who have been carried away by you? I tell you, they will not!”

“Go!” repeated old Waskema. “Dogs of white men, go; we do not want you!”

“Ay, you shall listen to me!” Tom McKay thundered. “I have known you a long time, Waskema. I have been in these mountains through many winters, and I have seen the grass starting green many springs in the valleys of Oregon. I know you, and I do not fear you; but I want to say to you this: I have been

sent here by Peter Skeen Ogden, the Hudson Bay chief factor. He gives out this word to all the chiefs of the Cayuses, and of the Nez Percés, and of all other tribes which are now threatening to raise their hands against the white men. He says to you: 'You have prisoners taken from the Waiilatpu mission and other places. Come to me at Walla Walla, and I will talk with you. Come to me without delay.' That is the message which he has commanded me to deliver."

"What then?" demanded an old chief. "What if we go to Walla Walla? He will throw us into the prison there."

"Ye know Peter Skeen Ogden," said Tom McKay. "For twenty-five years ye have known him. He is a man of his word. He calls you to meet him at Walla Walla. He will hold back the white men who are gathering with long-shooting guns in their hands. He will tell them to stay in their warm houses; but you must come to Walla Walla. If you do not come, he cannot hold back the Americans, for they are very angry, and their hearts are already black, because of this thing. Will you come to Walla Walla, and meet him?"

The fiery demeanor of old Tom McKay was not without its effect, even on Waskema. The listening chiefs knew when he delivered that message from Ogden

it meant something. The factor was a man of his word. For many years he had bought their furs; he had sold them goods; he had counselled with them. For many years he had gone to and fro, up and down the Columbia, and through the mountains of Oregon. They knew him, they respected him, and they feared him. Therefore, this message delivered by Tom McKay was of stern import.

"We will consider this thing," said one of the chiefs. "When is it that the chief factor wishes us to meet him at Walla Walla?"

"At once," McKay answered. "Send word to all the chiefs that he will meet them at Walla Walla at once; and tell them that it is concerning this thing which has been done to the people of the mission at Waiilatpu, and the prisoners which the Cayuses and the Nez Percés now hold. Tell them that if they come, Ogden will hold back the Americans; but if they do not come, he cannot hold them back."

For a long time Tom McKay talked to the Indians of that village. Phil Curtis sat silent beside him, as did the others who accompanied him. McKay was spokesman, and he was able to address the Indians with authority.

The chiefs and head men conferred together.

"We will send out the word you wish," they answered finally. "We ourselves will go to Walla Walla,

and we will try to get the other chiefs to go. We know that Ogden is our friend."

Tom McKay knew how far it was safe to attempt to go in his dealings with these Indians. If they would go to Walla Walla, he believed that Ogden would be able to effect the release of the captives. On the other hand, if the settlers who were rallying at the trading post and along the Columbia should march to attack the Cayuses, the death of the prisoners would be the result.

As McKay with his companions departed from the village, they moved away with the utmost boldness, scorning fear or danger, for they knew that an appearance of great courage impresses the Indian mind. Nevertheless, as soon as McKay reached the force which had been left behind, he ordered an immediate and rapid retreat. He did not want to attack these Indians, nor to be attacked by them. The shedding of blood on either side would be fatal to his hopes. His only desire now was to secure the release of the prisoners.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CONFERENCE AND ITS RESULT

THE words of Tom McKay in that village bore fruit. The Indian chiefs and leading men began to come together at Walla Walla. The fiery words of Matpah and the rasping denunciations of old Was-kema could not keep them from assembling to talk with their old friend, the famous fur trader.

Phil Curtis watched their faces as they came riding in from the villages on their ponies. Old Tilskit was there, with his heart warm for the white men, and especially for his white son, Phil Curtis. Pio-pio-mox-mox came also. Phil was touched when he saw him, for the friendly chief looked old and bent since the death of his son. Black-faced Tiloukaikt came, with treachery in his heart; and Five Crows appeared also. Nearly all the chiefs and leading men were there; but Matpah stayed away, nursing his wrath in the heart of the hills.

The weather had turned cold, for winter had now set in fully, and snow began to fly as the Indians assembled. They talked much, gathering round the great fire which

blazed and crackled on the hearth. Peter Skeen Ogden, now the chief factor of the Hudson Bay Fur Company, passed from one to another with kind words, shaking each by the hand, but said little on the subject that was uppermost in the thought of all. The time had not come for formal speech.

When it seemed that all the chiefs and head men who intended to come were there, Ogden had a large quantity of presents brought out. Blankets, guns and ammunition, hatchets, beads, looking-glasses, things dear to the Indian heart, were spread out on the floor, that the redmen might see and covet them. How the eyes of the chiefs and head men glistened!

"I have sent for you, and I have come a long way myself from Vancouver, that we might talk together as brothers," said Ogden. "I regret that all the chiefs I asked for are not here, two being absent. I shall expect you to report my words to them and to your young men on your return to your villages."

The Indians had ceased to look at the presents and looked now at the speaker.

"It is thirty years since I first came among you, and during that long period no blood has been spilt until the inhuman massacre at Waiilatpu. You know me as a trader of a different nation from the Americans. I have long bought your furs, and have supplied you with am-

munition ; but I did not give you ammunition with which to kill the Americans. They are of the same color as the Hudson Bay men, they speak the same language, and are children of the same God. Our hearts bleed when we know that you have used them so cruelly. I speak to you as a brother. I hope that none of the chiefs here had a part in that terrible thing. Some of you have said to me that your young men did it ; but is it not your duty to hold your young men in check ? Why are you chiefs, if you have no control over them ?”

He turned with flashing eyes to the younger ones present.

“ You young men, I know you pride yourselves on your bravery, and think that no one can match you ; but let me tell you that you must not deceive yourselves. If you get the Americans to begin fighting, you will repent it, and war will not end until every one of you is cut off from the face of the earth. You have listened to lying words. It has been told to you that your friends and relatives have died through sickness produced by spells which some Americans cast on them. It is said they were poisoned. Let me tell you, it was not Doctor Whitman who poisoned them ; but it was God who commanded that they should die. If we fall sick, and it is God’s wish that we die, we die ; but Doctor Whitman had nothing to do with that.”

Ogden was speaking with great earnestness, and the Indians were listening to him with open ears.

“I want to say to you that the Hudson Bay men can only advise you. I am here merely to advise you. We have nothing to do with this matter, so I can promise you nothing; but I will use my influence to keep the Americans from attacking you in your villages. As for myself and the Hudson Bay Company, we must remain neutral. I will do all I can to prevent war; but if you would help me to prevent it, you must deliver up to me all the prisoners which are now held among you. I will pay you for them when they are delivered to me here, and I do not want it said among you afterward that I deceived you. Bring me the prisoners, and I will pay for them, and I will hold back the anger of the Americans.”

For a little while after Ogden ceased speaking the Indians were silent. Then Tautau arose to reply.

“You must not think too harshly of us,” he urged, in a tone of apology. “Our young men are strong-headed. The good chiefs that we had are laid in the dust. Foolishness has crept into the hearts of many of our head men. No talk of war with the whites was ever heard until now. As for myself, I am willing to give up any prisoners that are held among my people.”

Tiloukaikt, the black-faced chief, made answer in much the same strain.

The sight of those presents lying on the floor of the fort helped to influence the chiefs and head men to consider the surrender of the prisoners; and no doubt the thought of the vengeance of the Americans, who had been roused by the death of Marcus Whitman and so many others, was also a strong determining factor. All the chiefs present promised that they would surrender the prisoners held in their villages. Then they took their presents, with many indications of childish joy, and, mounting their ponies, they rode away.

Before Tilskit departed Phil Curtis had a talk with him.

"Yes, I will seek out Matpah," said the chief. "That was in my mind. I will ride straight to his village."

Tilskit was as good as his word.

It was Christmas Eve when he rode away through the newly fallen snow, and it was Christmas night when he stood talking with Matpah before the lodge in which Cora Carlton was held as a prisoner. She heard him speak her name before the lodge door.

What she had suffered during her captivity, of terror, of foreboding, of actual distress from the long journey and the increasing cold, no one can know. She had been terrified, too, by Waskema and by other fiendish old women of the Cayuse tribe, who had seemed to her excited imagination determined to put her to instant

death. But she had not suffered more than other prisoners.

When she heard her name on the lips of an Indian, and that name pronounced in kindness, she leaped up with eager trembling from the roll of skins which was her cot.

Matpah had been kind to her, more so than she had expected from his manner at the time of her capture. He had seemed to recall something of those civilized touches given to the Indians at the Waiilatpu mission. He apparently recognized that this white girl was not accustomed to the brutal treatment which squaws accept without murmuring.

Cora Carlton had scarcely risen to her feet when Matpah came into the lodge, accompanied now by Tilskit. The latter had delivered the message sent out by Peter Ogden, and Matpah's adherents were wavering. Even the fierce medicine men, now that their passions had had time to cool, appeared to be afraid of the anger of the Americans. Matpah had discovered that the older chiefs and head men would not stand by him in a fight against the whites.

Old Tilskit looked at the white girl as if to assure himself that she was the one he sought; then he went outside.

"Ogden has sent for you," Matpah announced; "but

Matpah wants you to remain. If you will stay, all these horses, all these cattle on the hills and in the meadows, and all the skins that I have, shall be yours. All these other women shall be your slaves."

Cora Carlton looked at the passionate young Indian with his flushed cheeks and blazing eyes.

"I cannot stay," she declared. "I should die here — I am dying here!"

Outside, at the lodge door, the ponies of Tilskit stamped impatiently. Tilskit's voice was also heard. He had come for the prisoner, he said, at the command of Peter Skeen Ogden. He had a long distance to go. Plainly, he was not inclined to delay.

Cora Carlton took a step toward the lodge door. For an instant it seemed that Matpah would detain her by force. He stood in hesitation.

"I will go with you to the lodges of the white people," he said.

"No," she answered; and she passed him swiftly.

Outside was old Tilskit, and with him she saw Timuitti, whom she knew well. Both smiled upon her. The cold air outside was like the tonic of wine. Liberty was before her, beyond those hills. She glanced back in terror, almost fearing that Matpah would appear and drag her back into the lodge.

Timuitti had slipped to the ground and was pointing

to one of the ponies, on which was a woman's saddle, brought from Walla Walla. Tilskit also slid down, and between them they assisted her to mount to the back of the restive animal. Many Indians stood about, but all at respectful distance, except Matpah, who had come to the door of his lodge, and was looking out at her mournfully and even angrily.

"You will go?" he said. "Have I not treated you well?"

She did not stop to reply. Wise old Tilskit had the ponies already in motion. He understood the changeable nature of such a man as Matpah. It might please the young chief to alter his determination and bid defiance to Peter Skeen Ogden and the Americans. In that case, he would detain the girl, and Tilskit's mission would be a failure.

At the edge of the village Tilskit set the ponies at a trot; and thus the three rode away through the newly fallen snow, with the silvery frost crystals glistening in the air — rode away to Walla Walla and to freedom again.

From far and near the prisoners were brought. Rev. Cushing Eels, one of the missionaries, was conducted from a distant village of the Nez Percés. Matpah sullenly gave up all the women and children he had captured.

It was the morning of New Year's Day, in the year

1848, before all the prisoners arrived at Walla Walla. The last to come were the Spaldings, who were escorted from Lapwai by a crowd of Nez Percés, through the region occupied by the Cayuses.

As old Tilskit had feared, Matpah repented of his action before a day had gone by. Now, as Eels came in with his escort of Nez Percés, Indian horsemen were seen among the hills by the river. The riders were in war feathers.

"The Cayuses are gathering," said Ogden. "Cast off the boats!"

A fleet of boats was in the river, ready for a descent to Fort Vancouver. They had been held in readiness, because Ogden feared the changeable disposition of the Cayuses. Other Indian horsemen were seen riding in and out among the hills, and still others were observed coming down the river.

"Cast off the boats!" Ogden commanded.

Then out from the fort were brought the women and children who had been held as prisoners, and ransomed by the factor. They were bundled hastily into the boats. The men were in their places, with uplifted oars.

"Dip!" said Ogden. "Row!"

He was in the leading boat and steered it for the other shore.

“Row!” he commanded his Canadian boatmen.

The Cayuses galloped out of the hills, swinging their rifles and their bows and arrows. Their yells lifted in demoniacal fury. The women and children in the boats became frightened. A few of them stood up.

“Sing,” said Ogden to the boatmen, and they raised their voices in the old boating song:—

“Malbrouck has gone a-fighting,
Mironton, mironton, mirontaine!”

The yelling Cayuses lashed their ponies with the leather thongs which swung from their wrists. They drove their heels into the flanks of the foaming beasts, and jerked savagely on the lacerating horse-hair bits. Arrows fluttered out across the water like hissing serpents, and a few guns spanged and flamed.

But this spasm of wrath was futile. The boatmen continued to sing. The boats passed down the river, swept on by the oars and the swift current. Matpah and the chiefs who had rallied round him had experienced a change of heart too late. Cora Carlton and the other prisoners were now safe beyond their reach.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CAYUSE WAR

RETREATING in the boats down the Columbia, the prisoners and their escort met the main body of riflemen at the Dalles. Phil Curtis, and the men who had been with Tom McKay, stopped here, while Peter Skeen Ogden and the boatmen proceeded down the river to Fort Vancouver.

People everywhere were eager to open their houses to the rescued prisoners. Governor Abernethy exerted himself to make them comfortable. McLoughlin, who had not been with the Hudson Bay Company for two years, took some of them into his house. Others were quartered by Ogden, and by James Douglas. All of the captives had suffered severely, and some of them were nervous wrecks.

Five hundred men had gathered at the Dalles, with Colonel Guillian in command of the little army. Among its chief supporters were stanch old Tom McKay and John Curtis, while not among the least to be reckoned were Phil Curtis and Ben Allen.

Word came down the river that the Cayuses were massing for a descent of the stream, and that a general uprising against all the settlers of Oregon was contemplated. Scouts sent out reported that Indians had been seen in the hills and crouching in the tall grass by the river side. Mysterious smoke signals were beheld wavering against the sky. At night the tops of the hills flamed with Indian signal fires.

"Ay, lad, if they come, we will give them a hot welcome!" said Tom McKay to Phil Curtis. "They will learn that the riflemen of Oregon can fight."

McKay was everywhere, assisting Guillian in organizing the little army and in preparing to give the Indians a warm reception. The only piece of artillery to be had was a rusty nine-pounder. This McKay's men dragged round the cascades through a driving snowstorm. They planted it on top of their fortification, with its black muzzle pointed up the river.

Rumors of approaching Indians filled the air. Frightened settlers came in, reporting that they had beheld feathered head-dresses fluttering in the marsh grass, and that painted faces had looked in at their cabin doors. Now and then Cayuses were seen galloping through the hills. Then Indian boats came in sight, swinging down the stream.

Guillian made an address to his men, and Tom

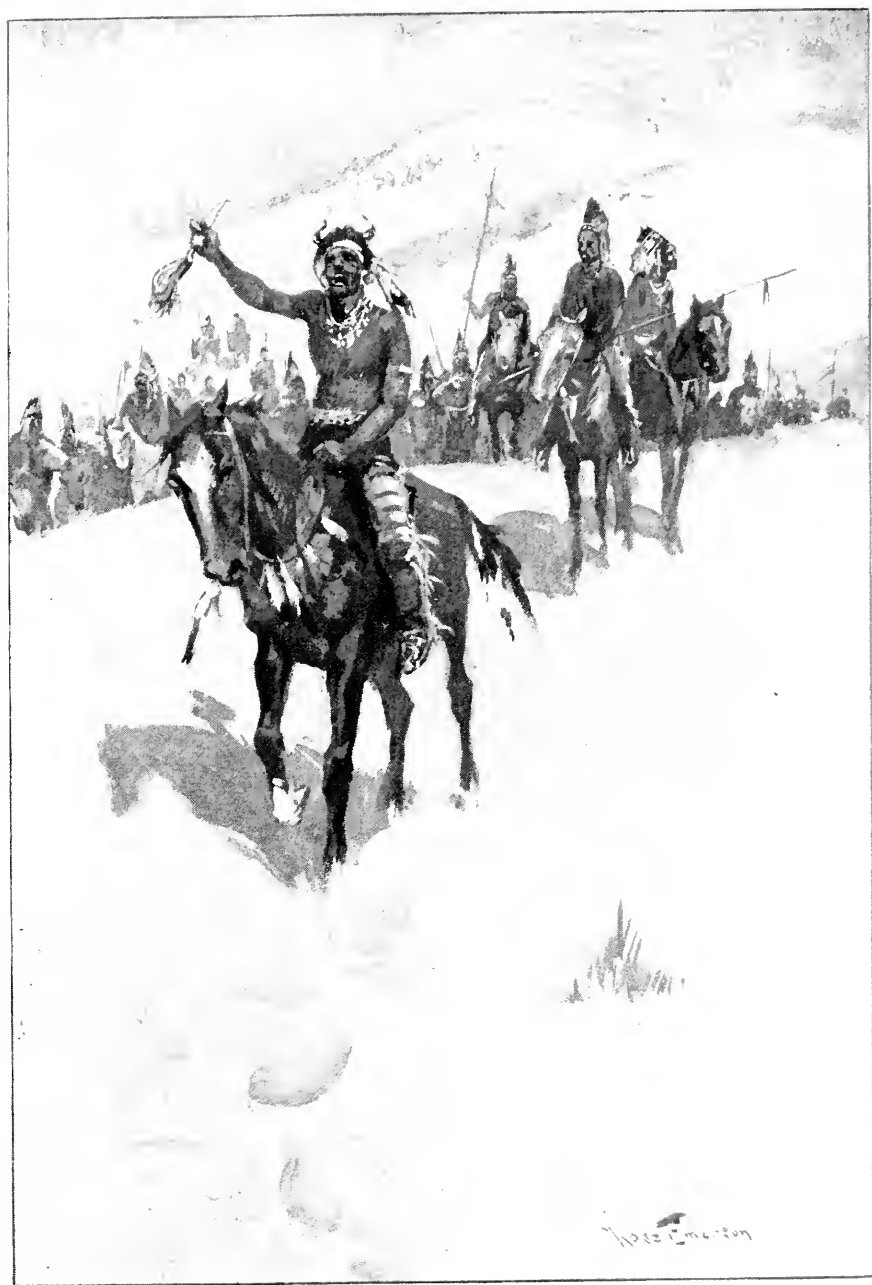
McKay cheered them on. The rifles of the mountaineers and the voyageurs had been cleaned until the spiral grooves glittered. Bullets had been run and patching prepared. The old nine-pounder was loaded and in readiness, with a special detail of men to work it.

The Cayuses threw off all disguise and came out boldly on the hills and along the river. They had painted their horses as well as themselves. Feathers floated from pony manes and Indian head-dresses. Matpah was there and Five Crows. All the disappointed chiefs of the Cayuses and the Nez Percés were in that assembly of warlike red men. The Indian squaws were camped on all the hills looking down on the little fort at the Dalles, fully expecting to witness the overwhelming defeat of the hated Bostons. Indian yells rose like the yelps of coyotes or the howling of wolves.

"Bah!" shrieked one of the medicine men, prancing out defiantly on his painted pony and waving his medicine bag. "I defy the Bostons! I am a great medicine! The rifles of the Boston men cannot harm me!"

Many Indians pressed forward behind him, while along the river wild yells arose.

A tall rifleman within the fort swung up his glitter-



"I DEFY THE BOSTONS"

ing rifle. It leaped to his cheek, and his keen eye glanced along the barrel.

"You're a great medicine!" he howled to the medicine man. "The rifles of the white men cannot hurt you! Then, take that!"

His rifle cracked, and other rifles spanged in unison with it. The medicine man dropped like a lump of lead from the back of his painted pony. Five Crows, who had been pressing forward close behind him, fell with a broken arm. Other Indians tottered and toppled. The yells of the women on the hills changed to screams.

The Indians who had crowded behind the medicine man drew back on the bridles of their horses, and wheeling about raced away at full speed. The fall of the defiant conjurer had stripped them suddenly of their courage. The long-shooting rifles of the white men could kill. They had killed the medicine man, and had broken the arm of Five Crows, and had bitten deeply into the flesh of others. The rifles of the white men could slay and would slay, even though the medicine men had claimed the contrary.

Within less than five minutes a strange transformation had been effected. The fluttering feathers, the fierce faces, the painted horses, were gone. The river rippled on toward the sea; the sun shone on the hills; the sky looked down peacefully. Not an

Indian was to be seen. All had vanished, and everything was silent except within the fort where the victorious riflemen lay.

"Bah!" said Tom McKay, "they fight and run like cowards. You can never get an Indian to stand up and take a dose of bullets. That medicine man was a fool!"

"Just like other medicine men," said Phil Curtis. "Some of them really think they bear charmed lives and that nothing can hurt them."

When it was seen that the Indians had really retreated, the riflemen under Colonel Guillian clamored to be led in pursuit.

"The rascals need to be taught a lesson," they said, "and they should be punished for the killing of Whitman and others. Unless they are crushed now, we shall never have peace in this country."

Phil Curtis had no desire for an Indian war, yet he knew that these old mountain men and voyageurs were right. The only force those Indians could understand was the force of the strong arm. The young Cayuse braves, who were the leaders in this uprising, had come to look with scorn upon the white men. Marcus Whitman had fallen without a blow lifted in self-defence. Peter Skeen Ogden had retreated down the river, as if he feared the Indians. Everything had

conspired to make these wild natives of Oregon believe that the white men were a race of cowards.

Guilliam gave the order to advance up the river, and then it was seen that the Indians had not really retreated. Every rock seemed to hide a bowman. Rifle shots rang out from beyond the ridges. In the tall grass some painted brave twanged his bowstring, then rose and fled in wild haste. A few of the white men fell, but the others pressed right on, driving the Indians before them.

All along the old immigrant trail this slow retreat continued. Throughout the day the red men fired and fled. At night their signal beacons flashed on the hills.

"We're in for an Indian war," was the opinion Phil Curtis expressed to Ben Allen.

"And war with Indians, at this time of year, isn't going to be any fun," said Ben. "I'm half frozen now, and worn out with hard work."

The little army was quite exhausted when it reached the village of Pio-pio-mox-mox, which was now located on the road to Wailatpu. The old chief had taken no part in the Indian uprising. Though he had lost his son at the hands of a white man, he was still the white man's friend. He was sensible enough to see that the act of one man should not be charged against the race.

He came out to greet Guillian's little army, and spoke kindly to Phil Curtis and Tom McKay.

"I have had no hand in this," he declared, speaking of the action of the Indians. "I have told the Cayuses that the white man strikes hard and strikes far. I saw him when he was fighting in California. I want to be the friend of the white man and have the white man to be my friend."

Pio-pio-mox-mox had been for a little while with Frémont's small army in California, and had there rendered gallant service in the war against the Mexicans. He had truly seen the white men fight, and he had fought by their side.

"We are tired; we are hungry," said McKay. "You have many beef cattle here. We do not want them unless we can buy them."

The old chief spread his hands out toward his herds.

"There they are," he said. "Take them!"

Guillian's men rested at the village of Pio-pio-mox-mox. Then they went on with a new supply of food, proceeding to Waiilatpu. All that remained of the mission was a heap of charred ruins. It was a sad sight to Phil Curtis. He had spent many happy months, even years, there. Whitman and his wife had been in good health and high spirits when last he had seen them, and now he was never to look into their faces again.

He wanted to get away from Waiilatpu, and he was glad when the order came to march. Tom McKay and Guillian were anxious to pursue the Indians into the hills.

"Matpah and Five Crows, and the Indians under them, have gone to the Snake River," was the information given by Pio-pio-mox-mox.

It was a long and wearisome distance, yet the pursuit was begun. The greatest care was taken to prevent word of the advance being sent on to the Indians. By forced marches the Snake was reached in an incredibly short time. There the Indians were discovered just about to cross the river with a large number of cattle.

The riflemen put themselves in fighting trim. The fugitives were sighted before they could charge, and some old chiefs came out, with hands uplifted in token of peace.

Tom McKay went forward to meet them.

"We are friends of Pio-pio-mox-mox," said one of the chiefs, a venerable man, while his lips trembled. This array of fighting men frightened him.

Tom McKay looked him straight in the eyes.

"We have come for the murderers," he said. "We want the men who killed Marcus Whitman."

"Gone — all gone!" cried the old man, spreading out his hands.

So said the other chiefs.

"Where have they gone?" McKay demanded.

"Across the river, farther into the mountains."

McKay looked out over the hills, and saw that they were covered with cattle. The little army was suffering for want of provisions.

"Whose cattle are these?" he asked.

"Many are ours," said the chief; "but some are Tiloukaikt's."

Black-faced Tiloukaikt had joined the hostiles.

"We will take the cattle," said McKay.

The chiefs begged for time in which to remove their own from the midst of the herd. Tom McKay hesitated.

"I will agree to that," he said at last, "because you say you are the Yellow Serpent's people. Get out your cattle."

The riflemen were not pleased with this arrangement, when it was communicated to them by McKay, for they distrusted the claims of the chiefs. McKay had granted the request because he was anxious not to injure or do wrong to any friend of Pio-pio-mox-mox.

The distrust of the riflemen was justified by events. Night fell while the work of separating the cattle was going on. When dawn came the white men saw they

were being tricked, for the Indians were working like beavers to put the entire herd across the river.

A roar of rage broke from the riflemen. Orders were given by Colonel Guillian to collect all the cattle, and the men set out to obey. As they were thus engaged, galloping here and there, 'snapping whips and shouting at the herd, a wild war-whoop sounded, like a thunderbolt shot from a sunny sky.

The Indians who were said to have fled across the Snake into the farther mountains were in the lodges, in full war regalia, with bows and rifles in their hands. The claims of the chiefs had been but a trick to deceive the white men.

As that yell rolled across the river, the entire village was seen to be swarming with warriors, who leaped from the lodges, shouting their war-cries. Rifles crackled, while arrows hissed in the air as if they were serpents.

The surprised riflemen fell on every hand, shot down by bullet and arrow. Some of them had ridden into the river to get out the swimming cattle, and several of these were shot as they tried to reach the shore. Tom McKay rode up and down the stream, wild with rage, yelling to rally and encourage the men. Phil Curtis and Ben Allen put themselves at his side, as the men bunched together.

"We shall have to charge them," said McKay, as he looked round at those who were gathering about them.

The Indian yells were lifted in wild clamor. Rifles still crackled and arrows hissed. It was the first time that Phil Curtis and Ben Allen had been under fire. Something seemed to rise in Phil's throat, but it was not caused by fear. From head to foot he thrilled with excitement.

"We are with you!" he shouted to Tom McKay.

"Ay, we are with you!" yelled some of the riflemen.

McKay's rifle went to his cheek.

"Fire!" he said. "Then charge!"

Rifles flashed. Whips and spurs were applied to the snorting horses, and the rushing charge was on. It broke the solid mass of Indians that had gathered in front of the lodges.

As Phil Curtis dashed forward yelling, with Ben Allen by his side, he came quite unexpectedly face to face with Matpah. If he had not known the young chief so well, he could hardly have recognized him; for Matpah, fighting with the upper part of his body naked and his long hair floating, was so covered with paint and decked with feathers that he seemed altogether another man.

A wild cry leaped from the lips of the Indian when

he saw before him the youth he hated. He had never forgotten nor forgiven Phil for throwing him into the river that day at Waiilatpu. To his distorted fancy, Phil had come between him and Cora Carlton, and he believed that it was through Phil's influence that Tilskit had been sent to release Cora from her imprisonment. He had longed for the opportunity which seemed now to have come to him, and his heart flamed with wrath and vengeance.

"Ho, dog of a Boston!" he yelled.

Then he drove his painted pony straight at Phil. As he did so, he tossed up his rifle,—a beautiful one which he had taken from some white man,—and fired at the breast of his foe. The swaying motion of his pony spoiled his aim, and the bullet flew over Phil's shoulder. The next instant Phil's horse and that of the young chief collided, almost pitching the riders from their saddles. Phil struck at Matpah with the rifle barrel; and the Indian, dodging the blow, drew his hatchet from his belt.

"Dog of a Boston," he yelled again; "now I kill you!"

His hatchet whirled through the air, glittering in its circular flight like a wheel of diamonds.

Phil dodged it, and struck again with his rifle barrel. Matpah caught it, and tried to jerk Phil out of his

saddle. Thus they came together, the horses jamming into each other once more. Matpah tried to get out a knife, but Phil clutched his arm and held it. Then, in the rage and fury of battle, he struck the young chief in the face.

Horses were trampling, blows being delivered, and yells were rising. The seething battle was sweeping past them in all its mad fury. Phil heard the wild war-cries of the mountain men, — as wild as the yells of the Indians themselves, — and he heard steel clicking against steel.

Then Matpah, disengaging his hand, struck at Phil with his hunting-knife. In return Phil jerked the young chief from his saddle. Horses raced by with pounding hoofs, and Phil being caught in their midst was borne away; but looking back, he saw Matpah leap to his feet, shake his fist angrily, and catch up his rifle. Then other yelling figures intervened to blot out the view.

The Indians scattered like chaff, but the respite was for a short time only. They continued to fire from behind the lodges, from behind rocks and trees, and from every point of vantage.

With the riflemen falling and the cattle lost to them, a retreat was ordered. The white men had been deceived, trapped, and overwhelmed. When they

tried to retreat, the Indians pursued ; and the little army was forced to take shelter under whatever cover it could find.

For thirty hours the fight lasted — for thirty hours the Indians were held at bay. Through the long day, and the longer night, the combat continued till it seemed the white men would be annihilated. Then they succeeded in effecting a retreat.

The story of that retreat and disaster spread quickly to all the Indian villages, and travelled likewise to the homes and towns of the white settlers. It stirred Oregon ; and Governor Abernethy issued another call for volunteers.

CHAPTER XXV

TRAPPED

THE defeat of the small force under Colonel Guil-
liam filled the hostile Indians of Oregon with sav-
age arrogance. Like the boastful medicine man who
had fallen before the rifle at the Dalles, they began
to believe themselves invincible. Medicine men de-
nounced the settlers with increased virulence. From
village to village old Waskema passed like an evil
spirit. Her sinister prophecies seemed to be whis-
pered on every wind, and wherever she went she
stirred up hatred against the whites.

"Now is the time to drive out the white men, while
they are frightened," she urged. "You, Cayuses and
Nez Percés, must not stay your hands now. Strike,
and strike quickly; strike, and strike strong!"

She was in every council lodge, and the medicine
men hearkened to her, for they looked upon her as a
being inspired. She based her sermons of hate on the
continued sickness in the Indian villages.

"They die," she said, speaking of the sick, "because

of the evil spirits loosed among us by the white men. Drive out the white men, if you would save the lives of your sick."

Everywhere Indian drums boomed in council lodges. By every trail over which white men passed, painted faces were seen. War rumors came down from the hills on the wings of every wind. It was reported that the Klamaths had come up from the southern mountains and were encamped on a branch of the Willamette. They were ready, it was said, to begin a war of extermination against the whites. The Klickitats had come out of their hill fastnesses to join the Cayuses. The Warm Spring Indians had announced that they would rise. The Nez Percés were ready to join with any band that was prepared to move against the whites.

Fear crouched by the fireside of every settler. Women hesitated to go beyond the doors of their houses. When evening shadows fell, children looked in fright into the gathering gloom. As men passed to and fro from settlement to settlement, they went fully armed.

Governor Abernethy issued a third call for volunteers. In the month of March the forces which had been gathering were ready to move, but the warlike Klamaths struck the first blow by attacking some cabins and shooting down cattle.

Again Tom McKay rode in advance of the settlers' forces. Under him was a small body of riflemen doing duty as scouts. One of these was Phil Curtis, another was John Curtis, his father, and a third was Ben Allen, the boy from Indiana. They carried only their rifles and blankets and a small supply of food.

As the little Oregon army moved out in the gusty spring weather, McKay's scouts went ahead, seeking information. The white men had learned a lesson. They did not intend to be trapped again, if they could prevent it. So every hillside that could shelter a foe, every rock that might screen a painted warrior, was inspected.

This entailed hard riding and a great deal of disagreeable and dangerous work. Phil Curtis and Ben Allen kept together as much as they could. Sometimes Phil rode out alone with his father.

Few Indians had been seen as the little army advanced into the hills, and these few professed friendship for the whites. Pio-pio-mox-mox was in his village. Tilskit was also in his village, it was reported, though it was farther back in the hills and much nearer to the hostiles. For a long time now Phil had not seen his Indian brother, Timuitti, since Tilskit and Timuitti would not take part with the white men, though they refused to aid the other Cayuses.

One day as Phil rode along with his father, while they watched carefully for indications of the presence of enemies, they beheld the smoke of a camp-fire.

"Indians!" said John Curtis, and he drew in on his bridle rein.

Side by side, on their ponies, Phil and his father sat, watching that drifting smoke.

"Whether they are friends or foes can only be told by investigating. If you will stay here with the ponies, I will try to find out."

Curtis slipped from the back of his horse, and, giving the bridle to his son, moved off softly in the direction of the camp-fire. He was dressed in the garb of a mountain man, and his moccasined feet made no sound. Phil watched him as he crept away with catlike steps and disappeared in the depths of the scantily timbered ravine from which the smoke ascended.

It was wearisome waiting after that. There was scarcely a sound or a sign of life. Though spring had come, few birds invaded this solitude. High in the tops of the slender trees the wind whispered, as if it would tell to the youth beneath the everlasting secrets of the hills. Now and again one of the ponies stamped restlessly, making a sound that seemed to Phil's straining ears loud and startling, but which could have been heard only a short distance away.

As the slow minutes crept on Phil Curtis began to be uneasy, yet he held his impatience in check. He patted the smooth, arching necks of the ponies, and talked to them in soothing tones to keep them quiet. All the while his eyes were fixed in the direction in which his father had gone.

"Something is wrong," he concluded at last. "Father has had time to go to that camp-fire and back half a dozen times."

Still Phil Curtis held in his impatience and tried to curb his uneasiness. He knew how exceedingly cautious his father would be in a matter of this kind, and he knew, too, he was not a man who could be trapped easily. When nearly an hour had elapsed and still John Curtis did not return, Phil's anxiety became so great that he could remain no longer there beneath the trees.

"I must find out what has happened. He may have fallen and hurt himself. There may be no Indians there at all, and I may be simply wasting time here while I might be helping him."

Pushed on by a wild desire to know what had occurred, Phil hastily tied the horses to some swinging boughs of a tree that grew near; then, with his gun held in readiness, he advanced in the direction taken by his father. Every yard of the way he scanned

closely. He was aware that if a trap had been set for John Curtis, it would probably be awaiting him, and if he were not careful, he would fall into it.

He became even more cautious as he approached the smoke. When he was within a hundred yards of it, he could see down into the ravine. The small fire which had been burning there seemed to be half extinguished, though smoke still mounted into the air. No one was to be seen. The whole thing was very alarming and strange. From behind the screen of a low bush Phil stared at the fire and tried to outline his course of action.

"Father!" he called softly.

There was no answer.

"Father!" he called again. "Father, are you there?"

The only sound was the wind whispering in the tops of the trees.

Phil's strained nerves cried out in anguish, yet he stood still, fearing to advance and unwilling to retreat. Finally he went on again slowly. He held his rifle ready, with his finger on the trigger.

"That fire was made by Indians," was his thought, "and they were here not so very long ago. I should be sure they had gone on, only I can't understand what has happened to father."

He advanced toward the fire.

A burning twig snapping in two, fell over with an explosive crackle, and the two ends resembled two red eyes staring at him. He stood still, gazing at these two bright spots, then looked all round. Again he advanced.

"Father!" he called.

There was still the same mysterious silence.

"Father!" he cried once more, raising his voice to a louder pitch.

He could now see beyond the fire, where there was some snow which the spring sun had not melted. There he beheld the imprints of moccasined feet. The tracks showed the toes pointed in the opposite direction, indicating that the Indians had gone on down the ravine.

"If they have captured father, they must have headed that way, taking him with them as a prisoner."

The thought served to destroy in a measure the extreme caution which Phil had so far exercised. He rose to an upright position and walked toward the fire.

As he did so some heaped-up leaves, which at a casual glance appeared to be mere drift, bulged upward, and two Indians, who had been lying there concealed, sprang upon him.

Phil Curtis saw at a glance that one of them was

Matpah, and threw forward his rifle; but a blow from a club knocked the muzzle downward, and the contents were discharged into the earth. Before he could gather himself for a struggle, Matpah and the other Indian were upon him, bearing him to the ground.

Although surprised in this treacherous manner, Phil Curtis made a gallant fight. Time and again he threw off his assailants, and so strong and active was he that he might have escaped from his foes if other Indians had not hurried to their assistance, springing into view from the surrounding rocks and gullies.

Beaten, bruised, and panting, Phil Curtis was hurled to the ground. His gun had been torn from his hand, and his hunting-knife was now snatched from its sheath. Unarmed and helpless, he looked defiantly at Matpah.

“Dog of a Boston!” that youth exclaimed fiercely, as he gave Phil a brutal kick in the side. “It is Matpah’s turn now!”

Phil did not answer, for he knew that any words he might speak would only bring new indignity.

He saw two Indians hurry away from the camp-fire, up the ravine, and he knew that they were going for the ponies. Some others then dragged up a bound and unresisting form — the form of John Curtis. He had not only been tied, but had been gagged to keep

him from giving warning to his son. He looked at Phil regretfully.

"Why do you not speak?" demanded Matpah, again kicking Phil in the side.

"Why should I speak?" said Phil. "You have trapped me. Is not that enough?"

"It is not enough—it is not all. Where are the ponies you stole from Stikine's village?"

The gag had been taken from the mouth of John Curtis. Phil looked at his father, as if to question concerning the answer he should make.

"Those ponies were not stolen," said Curtis. "Stikine's Cayuses took two ponies from Phil and the boy who was with him. When they could not get their own ponies, they took others. That is not stealing."

"My words were not for you," said Matpah. "Pah! I care not for you. My quarrel is with this one, who calls himself the white Cayuse, and says he is the son of Tilskit. He threw me into the river one day at Wailatpu. He sent Tilskit for the girl who was in my village. He struck me in the face in the fight at Snake River. Does he think that Matpah is a dog to stand all these things? He shall see!"

Phil looked at him calmly and even defiantly, but made no answer. Words were but poor weapons now.

"Stand up!" Matpah commanded, speaking to both John and Phil Curtis, when the two Indians who had gone for the ponies had returned with them.

"Where do we go?" Phil ventured to ask.

"To a place from which you shall not return."

"Matpah is a fool," said John Curtis, speaking to the young chief. "Does he suppose that he can do this thing and not suffer for it? My son is the adopted son of the Cayuse chief, Tilskit. Besides that, the white riflemen are marching into these hills, and if we suffer, they will avenge us."

"Pah!" said Matpah, with a shrug of defiance. "The white men will all be swept from the valley of the Columbia. They will be scattered like the ashes of a camp-fire. The anger of the Indians of Oregon burns hot against the white men. Matpah does not fear."

"The only one who is not afraid is a fool," said Curtis, boldly, quoting one of the proverbs of the mountains, with which all Indians were familiar.

Matpah made a motion toward his knife, as if with murderous intent; but he evidently thought better of it, for drawing his hand away, he spoke to the excited Indians who were clustering round him.

In answer to his command, they lifted John and Phil Curtis to the backs of ponies, and tied them there.

Many other ponies were now brought up—a sufficient number to mount Matpah's party.

The character of the trap into which John and Phil Curtis had fallen was plain. Some of Matpah's men had discovered them in the hills, noted their direction and the speed at which they were moving, and then a camp-fire had been built to attract their attention, and an ambushade prepared.

John Curtis could not condemn himself too severely for falling into such an ambush. He was so experienced a mountaineer that he felt he ought to have discovered and avoided it. The worst of it was, as it seemed to him, he had led his son into this terrible danger. What the outcome would be he could only guess; but the manner of Matpah and those with him did not augur well.

With the prisoners in their midst the Indians set out, travelling through the hills in a northerly direction. They followed a trail that led along the ravine and then across some sugar-loaf eminences which were treeless and almost barren of vegetation. Two hours later they came in sight of a village lying along the banks of a small stream that came down from the mountains, and so well screened that it could not be seen until a near approach.

A wild whoop from Matpah announced his coming.

There were answering whoops and a great clamor, with which was mingled much barking of dogs. Then Indians came out of the lodges and began to swarm from the village in the direction of the approaching party.

Among those with Matpah when he made the capture, Phil had recognized several who had been for a longer or shorter term pupils in the Waiilatpu mission school. One or two of them he had known well; yet how changed they were! There they had seemed tractable and almost civilized. Here in the solitude of the hills they were streaked with paint and fluttering with feathers. Every vestige of civilization had been cast off.

Now, as the swarming Indians from the village approached, Phil saw likewise in their midst faces that were familiar—faces of men and women who had at various times attended meetings held by Marcus Whitman. Some of them had even lifted their voices in Christian song and taken part in Christian service. Apparently this was all forgotten as they looked on the helpless prisoners, and voices once raised in song and praise were lifted now in wild yells of savage joy.

“The outlook is not pleasant,” said Curtis, speaking to his son in a low tone. “But I still have hope that

these Cayuses will not be foolish enough to do anything serious."

The hope was stronger on his lips than it was in his heart.

When the prisoners were brought in and the Indians had somewhat satisfied their curiosity, there was a movement toward the council lodge — a lodge of enormous proportions, located in the centre of the village, by the margin of the stream.

Though Phil and John Curtis were closely guarded, Matpah had disappeared. Yet one more terrible than Matpah was there. This was Waskema, the fierce old dreamer and necromancer. Her hate found vent now in bitter vituperation.

Standing in the crowd of staring women and children, she pounded the earth with her crooked staff and shook her skinny fingers at the helpless captives.

"I know you," she said, directing her words to John Curtis. "You have slept in our lodges and eaten of our food; yet now you lift your rifle against the Cayuses. You are of that foul brood that came over the mountains to swallow us; but your long-shooting gun is now no better than a stick."

She turned with blazing eyes upon Phil.

"And you, that call yourself the white Cayuse—you who say that your heart is red with the red blood of the

Indian — you are of that foul brood, and because of it you shall now die ! ”

The prisoners were conducted into the council lodge, where Umtippi came, and Waskema, and the chiefs and head men gathered. Outside of the lodge entrance, and all about, sat the gabbling squaws and the whispering, peering children. The squaws were even more fierce than the warriors. They seemed veritable harpies, desirous of tearing the prisoners limb from limb. Now and then they screamed their hate and cried aloud in fierce declamation.

Within the lodge Matpah stood up, accusing the prisoners of stealing ponies from Stikine's village. This was not enough, however, and he added to this charge another, which to the Indian mind was blacker, that of lifting the long-shooting gun of the white man against the Indians of Oregon.

There was a very babel of denunciation and confusion after these charges were made ; and it was only stilled when an old chief rose to ask questions, and then to speak his mind on the subject. He proved himself to be a white-haired conservative.

“ The blood of the young flows hot in their veins,” he said, as he lifted his trembling hands and peered with his aged eyes into the excited faces of the chiefs and head men who were assembled there. “ I am old, and

I know! I have seen the flowers of many summers and the snows of many winters. The frost has left its powder in my hair. The thing you would do to-day is evil, and only evil. I do not love the white man. It is because I love the Indian that I speak. The white men are in Oregon. They are strong fighters, and they have long-shooting guns. They have ponies, too — many, many ponies. Even now some of them, with their guns and their ponies, are in these hills. More will come.”

He paused and looked about, to observe the effect of his words.

“Not all the Cayuses are of one mind. The older chiefs, like myself, see trouble in this thing. Pio-pio-mox-mox is not here; Stikine is not here; many other chiefs whose words are good, and whose counsel is wise, are not here. I see about me only young men with hot hearts and foolish heads — men like Matpah, who has been a chief but a few moons. I say to these young men, that the white men can strike hard and reach far. Do not do this thing that ye contemplate.”

Phil's fear had grown as the old man talked. Until that time he had felt that his position was unpleasant, and might even be perilous; yet he had comforted himself with the belief that Matpah would not proceed to extremes, because even he must have known that in the

end he would be compelled to reckon with old Tilskit, who was a power wherever the Cayuses camped or roamed.

Now he saw that all fear of Tilskit had been swept out of the hearts of these young chiefs and head men. Matpah, in his rage, was ready to go to any length, and these foolish young men were ready to follow him. Nothing could appease the hate of the young chief except the death of these, his enemies.

Whatever the thoughts of John Curtis were, he managed to conceal them well. With an air of calmness, he listened to the speeches. He gave close attention to the address of the old white-haired chief. Now and then he glanced at Phil, as if he would encourage him. Matpah leaped to his feet as soon as the old man sat down, and words to shatter his arguments came hot to his lips. He was not to be cheated of his revenge.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE HEROISM OF OLD TILSKIT

IN spite of his determination to show no fear in the presence of his father and of these staring Indians, the heart of Phil Curtis sank with dread as he listened to the fiery denunciations of the young chief. Matpah recalled, with stinging words, all the evil deeds he could remember which the white men had done against the Oregon Indians since the first white trapper had crossed the mountains in pursuit of the beaver. He took up the arguments of Delaware Tom, of Dorion, and the other half-breeds, and worked them to his own uses.

Waskema, standing just within the lodge entrance, with the babbling women behind her, seemed to give strength to his words, while she searched the faces of the assembled Indians with her keen eyes.

“Ay, remember the words of Waskema,” she chanted in a sing-song monotone, now and then rocking her body to and fro as she leaned on her stick. “Ay, remember the words and the warning of Waskema!—

The white brood that came over the great mountains, and now suns itself in the valleys of Oregon, must be destroyed, like the brood of the serpent that suns itself on the rocks."

The emotional oratory of Matpah, and the sing-song utterances of the sorceress, were stirring the Indians to a pitch of fiery enthusiasm and filling them with an uncontrollable thirst for vengeance against the whites, when a clattering of hoofs was heard outside, and the voices of the women and children lifted in a changed and higher key.

The light thud of springing steps falling on the earth penetrated to the council lodge, bringing to a sudden halt the speech of Matpah and the muttering of Waskema. The women at the entrance dashed aside, squabbling and scrambling. Then, with a flit of the hand that threw open wide the beaver-skin flap at the entrance, old Tilskit himself came into the lodge.

His brown cheeks were hollowed like those of a skeleton, and his hooked nose was sharp as the beak of a bird. His fierce eyes glowed with fever brightness. He seemed a spectre, not a man, as he strode thus into the midst of the council lodge.

"Hear me!" he said, speaking in a shrill voice and lifting his long, thin fingers with a dramatic sweep.

“Hear me, ye Cayuses and Nez Percés; I have the great disease!”

All the Indians were drawing back in fear and terror. Even Matpah was shrinking before him. They had beheld victims of the great disease, as they called measles, and it scarcely needed his words to tell them that it had fastened itself upon him.

Waving his hand, Tilskit stood for a moment before them, his eyes searching their faces with burning glances. To their overwrought fancies he seemed a very angel of pestilence, his breath carrying the seeds of death. They knew that the great disease struck its victims down in most mysterious ways. They knew that if one who was well only went near it, it fell upon him in some strange manner.

Seeing the effect of his presence, Tilskit strode boldly across the lodge, with the Indians retreating before him, until he came to the prisoners. Here he stopped, and again turned upon the assembled chiefs and head men.

“This is my son,” he said, waving his hand toward Phil. “He is the white Cayuse whom I took into my lodge and my heart when my own son was swallowed by the great river. I did that because he saved the life of Timuitti, and because my heart ached in its emptiness, and the heart of Timuitti’s

mother cried out in desolation. Word came to me but an hour ago that the council had gathered, and now I am here."

Waskema broke in on him vituperatively.

"It is the white men who brought the great disease into Oregon! If it has sunk its talons into you like the hawk, the white men are the ones who are to blame!"

Tilskit bent on her his fever-bright eyes. There was sadness in his pinched face and in his tones, as he replied:—

"Waskema does not know what she speaks. But a little while ago, when I knew that the white Cayuse and his father had been taken and brought to this place, I heard a voice. It was the voice of the White Salmon—the medicine salmon—which spoke to me when I was but a boy and wandered into the woods and mountains, seeking for the spirit voice that was to guide me. The White Salmon spoke to me, and told me that this thing, which I knew ye would do, should not be; that I should arise and ride to this council, even though the great disease was on me."

"If the white man has cast the great disease upon you, you will die!" shouted old Waskema, fiercely.

Tilskit still looked at her mournfully and sadly.

"If it is the will of the Great Spirit that I die, I

shall die; but it was revealed to me by the White Salmon that I should rescue these people, especially my son, the white Cayuse, who saved the life of Timuitti. Though the great disease had laid its hand upon me, when the medicine salmon whispered that in my heart, and told me what I should do, I arose, and now I am here."

Again the harsh, high voice of Waskema broke out. There was a murmuring among the Indians, led by Matpah. Tilskit faced them unflinchingly, stretching out his shaking hand.

"My touch brings death!" he declared. "My breath is the breath of the pestilence! If you come near me, it will slay you, even as it may slay me. The great disease slays, and none can hinder; but it spares sometimes even those whom it has stricken. It laid its hand on Timuitti, yet it spared him; and if I obey the voice of the White Salmon, it may spare me."

Phil Curtis, who had been listening intently to what was said, here learned for the first time that Timuitti had been stricken with measles and had recovered.

High rose the murmurs of the Indians. It was a critical and crucial moment, and yet no one dared approach Tilskit. He observed this, and stooping quickly he severed the bonds of the prisoners with his knife.

Outside, wailing voices lifted; then within the lodge loud murmurings arose. The temerity of old Tilskit was passing strange. Matpah's face flamed with anger. Others of the younger men voiced their disapproval. Tilskit held them at bay with his fevered glance. He stretched out his quivering hand.

"To the chief or head man who lays hand on me or on these, on him will I breathe, and he will have the great disease, from which he shall not recover!"

He carried his wavering hand round in a sweeping motion toward the lodge entrance. He turned himself at the same time. John Curtis placed his numbed hand on the shoulder of his son.

"Go!" he said in a low whisper. "Go! Tilskit will save us!"

Phil was standing erect now, but his whole body trembled and his limbs seemed to be sinking under him. His muscles were stiff and sore from the long constriction of the binding cords. Yet he moved toward the lodge entrance, stepping along at his father's side, with his heart pounding in his throat in a way that almost choked him.

Old Waskema raised her rasping voice in loud disapproval. Tilskit, who moved now at the side of the released prisoners, fixed her with a burning glance. Over her head he lifted his shaking hand.

"Would you have the great disease?" he demanded in a vibrant tone.

From the entrance, women and children were fleeing with low cries of terror, and confusion reigned everywhere. Behind him Phil heard the chiefs and warriors clamoring in fear and anger.

Old Waskema could not stand before the blazing eyes of Tilskit; though she cried out against him, she backed away, mumbling. Tilskit passed her with swinging strides, hurrying the prisoners on.

Beyond, at a little distance, sat Timuitti, mounted on a pony and holding three others.

"To the ponies!" said Tilskit, speaking, as he had from the first, in the Cayuse tongue. "To the ponies!"

Now that he was out of the lodge he fairly ran, and John Curtis and Phil leaped at his side. In a moment, as it seemed, Tilskit had mounted, and the prisoners were seated in the rude Cayuse saddles. The old chief lifted a whip of thongs, with which he lashed his horse. Phil and John Curtis plunged their heels into the flanks of the ponies and gave them free rein. The confused sounds behind were growing in volume. The outcries were now loud protests.

"Ride!" called Tilskit.

"Ride!" echoed John Curtis.

The borders of the village were gained. Up from the timber-screened lowland toward the higher slopes the ponies galloped, speeding as if they were racing over a level roadway. Timuitti and Tilskit jerked on the skin cords attached to the rawhide bits in the ponies' mouths.

"Ride!" urged Tilskit.

"Ride!" responded John Curtis.

The clamor behind grew into a wild roar that flung itself up the hills. The fear of the great disease, which had held the Indians in a stupor of dismay, was passing away. Matpah was beginning to see that he had been tricked. Old Waskema was screaming her hate. The squaws, feeling that they had been cheated, were making the air vocal.

Seizing a rifle, Matpah pitched it to his shoulder and took a shot at the escaping prisoners. He was too excited to aim accurately, and in addition the distance was too great. The bullet fell short.

"Pursue them!" he commanded. "Pursue them and bring them back!"

"But the great disease!" cried the old white-haired chief, whose words of counsel had been overborne.

Whatever he thought of the action of Tilskit, he was at least not unwilling to use this fear to stop the pursuit.

Hearing him cry out in that way, many of the warriors and chiefs drew back. The great disease was a thing not to be despised. It had struck down many Cayuses. The blow of a bullet or an arrow they could understand; but this pestilence, that came from where no one could say, was a thing to fill them with strange dread. They hearkened to the words of the old chief, and halted. But Matpah and some of the more reckless of the younger men rushed to their ponies, mounted, and set off in hot chase of Tilskit and the escaping prisoners.

That was a wild ride across the sugar-loaf hills. As Tilskit and Timuitti and the rescued captives rode on and on, galloping fiercely and recklessly, the pursuers were left farther and farther behind, until they could be neither seen nor heard any longer.

The strength that upheld old Tilskit seemed strange and unnatural. He crouched weakly in his saddle, his eyes were hot and bright, yet an inner force sustained him. It was no doubt the voice which he had believed to be the voice of the White Salmon, telling him that he had done right, and urging him to the utmost exertion. Warm spring breezes came, as if to cheer him on.

"It is the Chinook!" he cried exultantly, as that warm wind from the sea kissed his hot cheeks. "It may be that the White Salmon makes the Chinook to blow! Who knows?"

"Who knows?" said John Curtis, in response.

What to old Tilskit was the voice of the White Salmon was to John Curtis the voice of God. It seemed to him it might be that God made the Chinook blow soft from the sea to give strength and encouragement to this heroic old Indian.

In spite of all, it was to Tilskit an exhausting ride. When he reached the camp of the mountain men, which had been from the first his destination, he dropped forward, weak and helpless, on the neck of his pony, and but for Phil, who leaped to aid him, would have fallen headlong to the ground.

"He has fainted!" Phil cried out in a tremor of fright.

The men, who had started up when they beheld these galloping figures, swarmed about now to offer assistance. Tilskit was lifted from his saddle by gentle hands and laid on a buffalo robe.

In a few quick words, John Curtis told the mountain men and Tom McKay, their commander, what Tilskit had done, and what he himself and his son had suffered.

Some strips of canvas were stretched to make a tent for Tilskit, and what remedies the men had were brought out. Phil and Timuitti hovered over the sick man, anxious to do something, and almost in a

panic of fright; but the old chief did not come of a fainting race, and he quickly recovered consciousness.

As soon as he found opportunity Timuitti acquainted Phil Curtis and the mountaineers with the story of his own adventures, which enabled them to understand how it came about that Tilskit had appeared so opportunely in the council lodge.

Timuitti had been out in the hills, digging roots to make medicine for his father, who had been stricken down but the day before. He had suffered, himself, from the great disease, he said, and he hoped the roots which helped him then would help his father.

It was while thus engaged, with his pony tied some distance away, that he observed the camp-fire smoke which Phil had also seen; and almost immediately he beheld some Indians attack John Curtis and drag him down. In the party he recognized Matpah.

After that he was afraid to go down to the camp-fire, seeing that Curtis had been made a prisoner, and that Matpah was in command. He had lain on the hillside looking down at the camp-fire, and had noticed that the Indians concealed themselves again. It seemed to him they were hiding from some one. When he had remained there a long time, not able to determine on any course of action, he had seen Phil Curtis appear,

almost in the midst of the Indians, who at once set upon him, as they had set upon his father.

Then Timuitti had risen in fright and scampered away. Getting his horse, he had ridden in hot haste to his father's village, and there had told him and Neekomy what he had seen.

Tilskit now heard Timuitti, as he narrated this story.

"It was then that I heard the voice of the White Salmon," he said. "The White Salmon told me to go, and I went. Because I obeyed the voice, it may be that I shall not die of the great disease."

"There's an Injun that ought to have been born a white man," said Tom McKay.

"Ay, McKay, but you're right!" John Curtis assented, and the mountain men agreed with him.

They built a hut there to shelter Tilskit, and put in it such things as they could spare. McKay was to go on with his men; and he asked many questions of John Curtis, and of Phil and Timuitti, concerning the village of Matpah and the number of Indians in it.

"Ay, when we strike them we will drive them like a whirlwind," he declared with energy.

Preparations for departure were already being made. John and Phil Curtis and Timuitti were to remain to do what they could for Tilskit and endeavor to nurse him to health.

Phil was thankful that Whitman had instructed him so well in the treatment of measles. He had but little medicine, but he and his father and Timuitti were well acquainted with the virtues of the roots and herbs which were to be obtained along the streams and in the hills. These they procured, and of them made teas and decoctions.

"A man who could make a ride like that is not going to die easily," said John Curtis, in a hopeful tone.

In his half-lucid moments the old chief babbled like a child, speaking of the White Salmon. It was talking to him, he thought, and was telling him he had done well.

The third day after the departure of the men Tilskit came out of what appeared to be a state of unconsciousness and announced in a triumphant voice that the White Salmon had told him he was to get well.

Measles had proved deadly to the Indians of Oregon, but the reason was not far to seek. They trusted to the foolish methods of the medicine men; and now and then when hot with fever one would leap from his skin cot and jump into the cold water of the river. When he arose to the surface, he was either dead or dying.

Tilskit's nurses were of the best, and after his announcement that the voice of the White Salmon had said he was to get well, he began to improve rapidly.

CHAPTER XXVII

CONCLUSION

TOM McKAY and his band struck the village of Matpah like a whirlwind, as he had promised. Matpah rallied his followers and made a desperate stand, but he was defeated; and in that fight Umtippi, the medicine man, was slain.

There were other fights and sharp brushes with the Indians, with innumerable adventures, while Phil Curtis, his father, and Timuitti were nursing old Tilskit back to health.

When the chief was able to return to his village and his lodge, Phil and John Curtis rejoined Tom McKay and the riflemen, among whom they found Ben Allen.

Waskema, after the defeat of Matpah, took refuge with the warlike Klamaths; and under her inspiration they were raiding settlements, destroying stock, and attacking lonely cabins.

McKay's force moved against them. The Klamaths fled, but made a final stand in the Abiqua bottoms.

Here, behind a shelter of rock walls, they awaited the advance of McKay's men.

"We must charge them," said McKay. "Our rifles can do nothing against these rocks, so we shall have to rout them out."

Phil Curtis and Ben Allen were in the very forefront of the riflemen as they moved against the intrenched Klamaths. From behind the rock walls, arrows fluttered and guns flamed. Indian yells rose clamorously, until the very air seemed to shake. On the right and on the left Phil saw men drop.

"Fire!" came the quick, sharp voice of McKay.

The long-shooting rifles flashed and roared. Then the riflemen dashed forward, cheering as they ran; and the Klamaths, broken by that charge, fled in wild disorder.

Old Waskema lay behind the rock walls among the slain, her fierce face distorted by hate and her claw-like hands clutching a bow of Oregon yew. She had died fighting.

As Phil Curtis looked into her face, he was filled with a deep sorrow. She had been vindictive and implacable; but she had been consistent in her enmity of the whites, and she had loved her people.

The hotly pursued murderers of Marcus Whitman sought refuge now beyond the Rockies. The warlike

Indian bands submitted, begging for peace. Five Crows, severely wounded, died in the village of Chief Joseph. Joe Lewis, the Cherokee half-breed, fled to the Great Salt Lake.

Pio-pio-mox-mox, Tliskit, Chief Joseph, and some others had taken no part in the war.

Among the white men who did not return from the campaigns was Colonel Guillian.

When the riflemen, worn out by constant pursuit, turned back toward the settlements, some of the Nez Percés, to prove that they were friendly to the white men and held the slayers of Marcus Whitman in detestation, pursued the murderers and those who still clung to their fortunes. It was a hot chase, ending on John Day River, where a furious pitched battle was fought, in which the Nez Percés were victorious. Matpah was numbered with the slain.

The Nez Percés took many captives. Five of the Indians thus taken and delivered to the white men were, after due trial, hanged at Oregon City for the murder of Marcus Whitman and those who fell at Waiilatpu. Among them was black-faced Tiloukaikt, once a member of Whitman's mission church.

Thus the Cayuse War ended, and peace reigned again in Oregon.

Until the day of his death, John McLoughlin made

his home in Oregon City. It is sad to say that, though he had lost his position with the Hudson Bay Company because, it was believed, he had been too generous and yielding in his treatment of the settlers, this kindness was not properly returned by the Americans.

McLoughlin was not the only man, however, whose courage and goodness were better understood and appreciated by a later generation than by his own. That was likewise the fate of Marcus Whitman. What he did for Oregon has been much more fully recognized in recent years than when the heroic deeds were done.

To-day a tall and graceful shaft of granite marks the grave of Marcus Whitman and the graves of all those who fell with him in the massacre at Wailatpu. In addition, a college bearing his name has been established in the city of Walla Walla, but a few miles from the site of his mission station. But Oregon itself, saved to the Union by his famous ride, is his greatest and best monument.

A few words should be written concerning those whose adventurous deeds and heroic conduct have been most closely chronicled.

Ben Allen, the Indiana lad, became a prominent and respected citizen of the new Oregon; while Tom McKay and John Curtis lived many years to trap the beaver and

follow the deer in the mountains. Old Tilskit and Pio-pio-mox-mox were until the end honored chiefs in their respective bands, and Timuitti, called afterward Timothy, became a preacher of the gospel, and did much to reestablish mission work among the Oregon Indians.

As for Phil Curtis, he was, some time after the close of the Cayuse War, married to Cora Carlton; and for many years they dwelt at Walla Walla, honored and loved by all who knew them.

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